DID JESUS REDEEM MANKIND?

Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad
Khalifatul Masih II (May Allah be pleased with him)

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DID JESUS REDEEM MANKIND?

(This book is the English version, translated by Nafisur Rahman A. G. Soofi, of some extracts from the Urdu Commentary and notes on *Surah Maryam* (19th Chapter of the Holy Quran), by Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II (May Allah be pleased with him) and has been reproduced from his famous work the *Tafseer-e-Kabeer* Vol.4.)

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Publisher's Note

The book "Did Jesus Redeem Mankind?" first published in 1960, is an English translation of the commentary and notes on Surah Maryam, chapter 19 of the Holy Quran, by Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II (May Allah be pleased with him). This thought-provoking book delves into the question of whether putting Jesus Christ on the cross was sufficient to redeem all of humanity, using references from both the Holy Quran and the Bible.

We are pleased to publish a revised edition under the auspices of Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (May Allah be his Helper), the fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah[as] and Supreme Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at.

While updating the design and layout for this edition, extra precautions were taken to preserve the integrity of the original text. A comprehensive index is also included that will provide readers with a deeper understanding of the topic at hand.

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May Allah the Almighty abundantly reward everyone who helped with the completion of this reprint. Ameen.

Naseer Ahmad Qamar
Additional Wakeel-ul-Ishaat
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About the Author

Hazrat Musleh Ma'ud, Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad (may Allah be pleased with him) was the Promised Son and the second Khalifa of the Promised Messiah[as], the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Born in accordance with a mighty prophecy of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him), he was gifted with knowledge, both secular and divine. His understanding of the Holy Quran and Islamic matters was immense. He wrote a detailed commentary covering several chapters of the Holy Quran. His books and lectures are replete with points of wisdom and understanding. He was the prince of exposition—both in writing and speech. He was filled with the light Divine.

In 1914, at the age of 25, he was elected as Khalifa, that is, successor, to the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). For 52 years, he led the Community and served the causes for which it was established. He inspired and motivated his followers' spiritual development; he spoke and wrote in defence of Islam; and he established institutions to propagate Islam all over the world.

INTRODUCTION

Islam and Christianity came in close contact in the early days of the Holy Prophet's life in Mecca when a party of Muslims sought refuge in Abyssinia, where the Negus refused their extradition back to their home town.

The migration of the Muslims to Abyssinia had followed the revelation of the Chapter entitled Maryam in the Holy Quran. It was the first reference to Christianity, its teachings and tenets, and to the future conflict between the two faiths and their respective followers.

Not long afterward, the Romans, alarmed at the sudden emergence of the conquering Prophet in neighbouring Arabia, decided to wipe out the rival faith and its new empire with the sword. The small kingdom of the friendly Negus is still very much on the map, but the vast and fearsome Roman Empire is no more.

This book is not a chronicle of the clashes and conflicts that took place between the two great religions in the past. These are a continuing part and process of history. Far from that, the book tackles the problem at the higher spiritual plane, in the light of the prophetic background as embodied in the Bible and subsequently manifested through historical events, highlighting the fundamental similarities between the Mosaic and Muhammadan dispensations, as also the fundamental contradictions

that have given Christianity its popular concepts, making of it a rival to its original blueprint. It further deals, in the light of the Quranic prophecies, with the phases of decline and progress, and of the cycles of disaster and prosperity which the Muslims were destined to go through in striking similarity to the familiar history of Israel.

"Did Jesus redeem mankind?" is the English version, made by Nafis-ur Rahman A.G. Soofi, of the Urdu Commentary and Notes on the *Surah Maryam*, (Chapter XIX), by Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II, Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement and has been reproduced from his famous work the *Tafsir-e-Kabir*, Vol. IV.

March 8, 1960,
Rabwah,

Jalal-ud-Din Shams,

بسم الله الرحمان الرحيم

ISRAEL AND MUSLIMS

This *Surah* is related to the earlier *Suras* in that the preceding *Surah Bani Isra'il*, in throwing, light on the question, how Islam would make progress, says that since the Muhammadan Dispensation has basic similarities with the Mosaic Dispensation, Islam would forge ahead in much the same way as did the Mosaic Mission. Citing some events relating to the Mosaic Dispensation, the *Surah Bani Isra'il* observes in this connection, that two great disasters were ordained to befall the Mosaic Dispensation after the lifetime of Moses, even as it was destined to enjoy two periods of great prosperity; and since the progress of Islam must approximate to that of the Mosaic Faith, Muslims will be treated in like manner. In other words, as after Moses his followers were marked for two great disasters as also two bright periods of prosperity, so shall the Muslims have their share of it, i.e., two ruinous catastrophes and two periods of glory.

STRIKING SIMILARITIES

Accordingly, the first national calamity, that overwhelmed Israel, followed the period of David, which

was the time of its meteoric rise. It spelled disaster for Jerusalem, the centre of Jews. In close resemblance to this pattern, Baghdad, the centre of the Muslim Empire, was ransacked after the decline of the period of Abbasside glory that had followed the Holy Prophet's time. Muslim Divines were scattered hither and thither flowing their escape, after the centre fell into the hands of the invaders. In both cases, the first calamity that overtook the two peoples, affected in no small measure, the headquarters of their respective States. Nebuchadnezzar sacked the city of Jerusalem, taking away with him all the valuable things he found there and forced the Jews into exile. The disaster that befell the Muslims, likewise, resulted in a considerable measure, in the desolation of the centre of the Muslim State. Another feature common to both consists in point of the period. The time that intervened between the terms of the early glory and the first destruction of Jerusalem approximated the time that intervened between the Abbasside ascendancy and the fall of Baghdad.

The Jewish Kingdom could not survive the second disaster that befell the Jews in the time of Titus; they had to flee the country. Some, therefore, sought refuge in Iran and some in Egypt. A similar second disaster was destined for the Muslims. As the first national catastrophe that befell the Jews began sometime before the advent of the Messiah, and extended to quite some time after his

period, so it fared with the Muslims. The general decline of Muslims had set in through the manoeuvrings of the Christian powers, which had taken the place of the Roman Empire, sometime before the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) announced his claim. They became weak everywhere, their States fell apart, and Islam suffered a severe setback, and Islamic rule was wiped out from the face of the earth. This decline continued during the term of the life of the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) and even afterwards. But, as prophecies say, it is ordained that this decadence of Muslims must change into prosperity after a certain time and that they must once again become dominant in the world.

It so happened that after their first disaster, the Jews had a second lease of national regeneration through their enemy nation, who helped them rebuild Jerusalem and repatriated them to their national centre. A similar sign occurred following the first decline of Muslims but with far greater glory. The King of Persia and Media, who helped in the rehabilitation of Jews in Jerusalem, was a sincere well-wisher and friend of the Jews but he did not accept their faith. But the Tartar rulers, who conquered the Muslim State, were conquered back by Islam and instead of breaking down the Muslims, they became instrumental in their progress and regeneration, and Islam entered through them on its second term of ascendency.

As against this, it was the second disaster that befell Israel, eventually leading to the conversion of their conquerors to Christianity. They became so deeply attached to the Jewish religion that they respected the Old Testament and the Prophets of Israel as much as they did their own Christian tradition. The same is fore-ordained in the case of Muslims. The ruling races that have over-run Islam and Muslims, must one day ultimately enter the fold of Islam, and the faith of the Holy Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) must regain its lost glory and attain ascendency in the world.

SUMMARY OF THE SURAH

The abbreviations with which *Surah Maryam* begins epitomize the attributes of God presenting a comparative appraisal of the Christian and Islamic doctrines and point out that incipient Christianity had a Divine source. However, the untrue belief which ran counter to Divine attributes came incorporated into it.

This is followed by references to the Messiah (peace be on him) prefaced with a mention of Zacharia (peace be on him). For, the principal sign of the Messiah (peace be on him) that had found currency among the Jews was the descent of Elijah from heavens, which was to precede the appearance of the Messiah (Malachi, Ch. IV

Verse 5). Accordingly, this was the most critical question that was raised before the Messiah after his advent. The New Testament has, therefore, taken unusual pains to find an answer to it and says in this connection that John was Elijah (Matthew, 11:15; 17:12 and Marks, 9:13) and that Elijah was not to come down from heavens, but was to be born of a woman (Matthew, 19:12, Luke, 7:28).

The mention of Elijah precedes the references to the Messiah (peace be on him), beginning with his mother instead of with his claim. For, with the birth of the Messiah, the initiation of the Muhammadan term is closely interlaced. Its details are that Abraham (peace be on him) had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac (peace be on them), born to his two wives. Ishmael was his first-born, and Isaac was his second child. Abraham (peace be on him) had Divine promise in respect of both: about Ishmael as mentioned in Genesis (16:10-12; 17:8-14; 17:18; 17:20; 21:13 and 21:17-21) and about Isaac as mentioned in Genesis (17:19 and 17:21).

Again, another prophecy about both the brothers is to be found in Genesis, 22:17-18. Read together with Genesis 17:21, and these references make it clear that the Abrahamic dispensation was to find expression through Isaac, to begin with and had to come to its fulfillment through both the brothers. Clearly, therefore, the best manifestation of the Abrahamic dispensation must

come through the progeny of Ishmael. However, when this heritage was to pass on from the children of Isaac to the generations of Ishmael, it should naturally come as a great shock to the former and weigh heavily on them. It was, therefore, necessary to make this shift a gradual process, establishing it with a clear and cogent argument.

These verses hint that on their violating the covenant continuously, God decided to replace the progeny of Isaac by the children of Ishmael in order to fulfill His promise to Abraham. As a final admonition to the House of Isaac, He decided that a virgin should give birth to a son who should be the successor to Moses. Because of such a vicar of Moses, the promise, that was to seek fulfillment through the House of Israel, was halved, *i.e.*, it was cut off from the House of Israel from the father's side and was confined only to the mother's side, since she came off the Israel stock.

In the popular view, a child could not be born without a father; though everything is possible for God, yet people discounted the possibility on the plea that it was against the ways of the Almighty. The latest researches have, however, proved that this is not so; on the contrary, it is within the range of the laws of nature. We reproduce here some fresh evidence in this behalf. Doctor Helen Spurway, of the University College, London, has advanced the theory that the birth of a child does not

necessarily require a male. The Lancet, a London weekly, has published experiments made in this behalf. Also, the Sunday Pictorial, London, has published testimony of three women in its issue of November 13, 1955, in answer to an article on the above theory, claiming the birth of babies to them, without the male playing any part. It has followed it up with further testimony of other nineteen women, in its issue of December 28, 1955.

However, since the Holy Quran laid its real stress on the fact that the Promise of God to Abraham has found its fulfillment through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) who comes off the Ishmaelites. It has, therefore, dealt in detail with the fatherless birth of Jesus of Nazareth (peace be on him), pointing out that the very nature of his birth carried the warning that the term of the consummation of the Divine covenant with Abraham, through the House of Isaac, was coming to a close. It was, therefore, that God had reduced its importance by half through the Messiah. The rest had, of course, been nullified by his followers through their abolition of the circumcision, which stood as a token of their commitment, thus voiding the covenant about the House of Isaac, for good—circumcision being a specific condition of Abraham's covenant with God. The Bible says in this connection that God thus spoke to

Abraham (peace be on him):

> "And, God said unto Abraham: Thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised." (Genesis,17:9-10)

DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

The Quran next takes up the claims of the Messiah and, advancing arguments in support of their truth, simultaneously dispels the erroneous beliefs ascribed to him by his followers:

The abbreviated letters كهيعص (19:2) stand for the attributive names of God, according to Ummi Ha'ni, a cousin of the Holy Prophet (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him), ک for Kafi, ھ for Hadi, ع for 'Alim and ص for Sadiq. It is noteworthy in this connection that the Holy Prophet (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) has stated four Divine attributes as against the five letters of which this expression is composed. Thus he seems to have left the letter یا out. We should, therefore, look into his reason for this. It appears that since the letter یـا is also used as an interjection, the Holy Prophet (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) has declared it to be an

interjection in this context, the first two attributes thus being correlative to the latter two attributive names. In their amplified forms, the abbreviations would run thus "O All-Knowing, Truthful Lord, Thou art the Sufficient, the True Guide. In the spirit of this sense, the Sufficient, the Guide, two attributive names of Allah, as corollaries of His attributive names, the All-Knowing, the Truthful, are decisive between Christianity and Islam. For, when we say "O All-Knowing Truthful Lord, Thou art the Sufficient, the True Guide," it means that the attributes, the All-Knowing and the Truthful, are the source-attributes while the Sufficient and the True Guide are their correlatives. This is a truth that is rationally sound.

Attributes of Allah the Excellent are of two categories. Some attributes are not productive of a sound effect while certain others are. They are, in other words, source-attributes for others. For instance, God is المطعم (The Feeder). Nevertheless, this attribute comes into play after the creative process and if there is no provision what is there for Him to feed with. Therefore His attributive name المطعم (Feeder) predicates His being الرزاق (The Giver of provision). Some attributes are, therefore, primary and source-attributes, while others are their concomitants. Here the attributive names represented by ك and ھ are concomitants of the attributive names represented by ۶ and ص. In other words, when God is All-Knowing (علیم), He is necessarily the Sufficient

(کافی) and being The Truthful (صادق), He is logically also the True Guide and very reasonably so. As an instance in point, when a person is All-Knowing, he should necessarily be adequate. In case of medical treatment, for example, a perfect diagnosis is essential and such a diagnosis calls for equally perfect knowledge. One, who is not fully conversant with all that is worth knowing for a cure, cannot undertake to treat a disease. But one, who is so conversant, can indeed be depended upon to undertake treatment. It is, therefore, quite evident that one who knows, must be adequate, for knowledge and not ignorance is of avail.

THE OPERATIVE LAWS

There are only two laws operative in the world, the law of nature, and the law of *Shariat*. One, who is All-Knowing, can alone guide in matters that fall within the purview of the laws of nature, as only the learned physician shall achieve success. In the law of *Shariat* also, only the most knowledge will be the real guide. One who is not aware of our physical requirements or knows but little of our spiritual needs cannot prescribe a correct recipe. It is, therefore, true that the All-Knowing must also be Sufficient. Similarly, the one who is the Truthful will also be the True guide. For, falsehood and error are misleading, and the Guide should be the one who is

truthful; he should, in fact, be the source of all truth. The direction of others than Him will, therefore, be doubtful and unacceptable.

Now let us see what the Bible says in this connection. We will first take up the attribute of Knowledge in the Divine Scriptures. The New Testament says:

> "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but my Father only." (Matthew, 24:36)

The reference shows that there are different quantities of knowledge in the world; one quantity is within the human capacity, another quantity is the property of the angels, and there is yet another which is neither within the scope of human capacity nor in that of the angels and is exclusively the domain of God. In other words, perfect knowledge is the exclusive Divine property. Since He possesses perfect knowledge, logically, therefore, He must be believed to be Sufficient as well. It again says:

> "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heaven. By his knowledge, the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew." (Proverbs, 3:19-20)

It clearly means that God based the law of nature on knowledge. Whatever knowledge that comes into being

later on, whether spiritual or scientific springs from His knowledge, for, it is said:

> "By his knowledge, the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew."

In other words, God the Excellent perfected knowledge to this extent that the heavens dripped with guidance for mankind, i.e., revelation and word of God were sent down, thus perfecting knowledge in every respect. This reference shows that guidance comes from God, and this alone constitutes actual charter; for, the All-Knowing is at its back, while man is, by himself, inadequate.

Regarding the Divine attribute of truthfulness, the Bible:

> "Into thine hand, I commit my spirit, thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth."
> (Psalms, 31:5)

Salvation, thus, clearly lies with "the Lord God of Truth," even as law-giving is the prerogative of the All-Knowing.

Again it is said,

> "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth."
> (Psalms, 119: 142)

Both the New and the Old Testaments, therefore, take the stand that perfect knowledge is an attribute

of the Divine Being, even as perfect Truthfulness is the virtue of the Lord-God. In subscribing to the view that God, the Excellent is alone the All-Knowing and the Righteous, the Bible has no alternative left but to agree that none can be Sufficient except the All-Knowing, even as none will grant salvation but the Lord-God of righteousness. If these two basic postulates are tenable, it follows that the Divine attribute of perfect knowledge and His manifestation of Sufficiency negative the theory of vicarious atonement, in as much as, the Divine attribute of righteousness and His manifestation as the True guide negative the theory that the law is a curse and constitute a powerful rebuttal of the Christian doctrine of Salvation. If God is the All-Knowing, there remains no room for vicarious atonement in the structure of faith, for, the theory of vicarious atonement is grounded in the belief that Allah proposed to run the universe according to a definite scheme and deputed His prophets to guide men accordingly, but ultimately the scheme failed, and God had, after beating a retreat, to sacrifice His son. If this position is tenable, God neither remains the All-Knowing nor the Sufficient.

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

Thus, by the Christian doctrine, attributes of the Creator-God are exposed to grave injustice reducing the Divine

Being to an empty shell. The criteria of true religion lie in the promotion of human belief in the person of God and faith in His attributes.

In short, in these abbreviations, the attributive Divine name—the Sufficer, has been put against the Christian doctrine of vicarious atonement and the attributive Divine name—the True Guide, against the Christian theory of redemption. These constitute the two fundamental articles of Christian Faith in direct conflict with Islam. The doctrine of the tripartite godhead is a secondary theorem, Christianity rejects Salvation and does not believe in the possibility of spiritual progress for mankind without a belief in the theory of vicarious atonement. These two beliefs negate the two Divine attributes, the Sufficer and the Guide. As a result, His two other attributes, the All-Knowing and the Righteous, are voided. These two fundamentals of Christian faith, it is thus evident, void the very idea of Godhead. If the teachings of religion ultimately contrary to the very basis of the godhead, we cannot but treat that religion as untruthful, for the obvious reason that religion essentially consists in promoting faith in the Divine Person.

TRINITY

No doubt, belief in trinity holds an essential place in the fundamental articles of Christianity. But, it is so strictly

bound up with the belief in vicarious atonement and disbelief in the salvation, that they stand together and fall together.

Christianity, as is well-known, believes that, in order to save man, God sent the Messiah, His only son, in atonement. According to Christianity, God cannot forgive sin as it would contradict His justice. By forgiving the sins of man, He runs the risk of being iniquitous. But, since, at the same time, He was very keenly desirous that men should be saved, therefore, in order to secure this end, He sent His Son to be put on the Cross, so that those who believed in his death on the Cross may be saved from spiritual punishment and thus his giving up his ghost on the Cross may atone for their sins.

It is evident that the theory of vicarious atonement presupposes tripartite godhead, for it is based on the doctrine that God hanged His only son to death and gave him life after three days. This belief predicates the existence of more than one God. In the case of His being the one and only God, this cannot be a practical proposition. For, God, cannot bring Himself back to life three days after hanging Himself to death.

In the event of accepting the doctrine of tripartite godhead, however, one is confronted with the question of whether the three members of the order have equal powers or differ from one another in that respect. If one

has greater power than the other, this will amount to an imperfection in God the Almighty. According to the consensus of belief, all religions agree that an imperfect being cannot be a God. The point does not call for any lengthy elaboration. This is a logica11y cogent theory that an imperfect object is neither eternal from the beginning nor everlasting, and a being lacking in these characteristics cannot be the deity. All religions agree on this; even the Christian religion cannot challenge the stand that God must necessarily be eternal and everlasting while no imperfect being is eternal or everlasting.

It was in my early youth when I was about twenty years of age, that I happened to go to *Dalhousie* for a change. A well-known Christian missionary, Mr. Ferguson, by name, was on a visit there. He had converted hundreds of people to Christianity. He was engaged in distributing literature there and spreading the Christian mission work. Some Muslims who had a zeal for the faith approached their Maulvis, urging them to counter-act this threat. Nevertheless, they pleaded their inability. At last, they called on me and asked me to take it up with the missionary as they felt they had lost their face. I was very young then and was not so advanced in theological studies, but I readily responded to their call. Accordingly, a party of us started towards the Christian missionary's residence. On arrival there, I told him that I wanted to put a few questions to him. We were seated around

a table at that time, and a pencil was lying there before me. I put it to him that in case he wanted to pick up the pencil what would people think of him, if he called to his help me and his companions and his waiter and his cook and his neighbours and when all the people of the locality had collected, required of them to lift the pencil from the table and hand it over to him? He asked me back what I was driving at. I wanted to know if it would be considered rational on his part and how people would react to it. He answered back that they would take him for a lunatic. Then addressing him, I asked whether God, the Father, had, independently, the power to create the world. He said He had. Next, I asked him if God, the Son, had independently the power to create the world. He affirmed that he had. Then I asked him if God, the Holy Ghost, had likewise similar power to create the universe. He said he too had. Then I observed that all this looked very much like the lifting of the pencil from the table in the manner mentioned above. When all three had equal power and could do the creative work equally well, they were wasting their time; as they could very well bring the world into being individually. Then I asked him if he could tell me of a particular job which, God the Father could do but God the Son could not, which again God the Son could, but God the Holy Ghost could not, or God the Holy Ghost could, but God the Father could not, or, God the Son, could, but God the Father could

not. He said there was no such undertaking as either one of them could and the other one could not do. Then I asked him what all this fuss meant: that if two gods sat idle, it really became great predicament that they could do a job but were wasting their time, and if all three jointly undertook a business, while each one could do it equally well, it looked something mad. He lost his equanimity and remarked that vicarious atonement constituted the basis of Christianity and that one understood Trinity only after he believed in Christianity. I observed that his theory led from one hypothesis to another in that one could not believe until one understood Trinity, and one could not understand Trinity until one believed and that as such, all logic rejected this as an impossible thing. He begged to be excused and wanted the talk to be confined only to the theory of vicarious atonement.

The theory of vicarious atonement is deeply connected with the Trinity. If the former is proved to be untenable, the latter falls to the ground. Since this belief is polytheistic, the Divine attribute of knowledge has, therefore, been stressed explicitly in this context. The Promised Messiah (peace be on him) has in his books, discussed threadbare the point that if one is endowed with perfect knowledge of a thing, one could certainly make it. If, for instance, a man knows that a house can be built by laying bricks together in a certain order, he can be enabled to build one therewith. Or, if one knew

that by mixing earth with water and pouring the mixture in moulds, one could make mudbricks, and by burning the same in the fire-kiln, one could make clay-bricks, he would be able so to make bricks. Similarly, if one could know how super-soil was made, one would be able to make it. In short, the art of creation is dependent on knowledge. When a man attains perfect knowledge of the composition and constitution of a thing, he can make it. If one knows how to make a watch, he can manufacture one. One who attains perfect knowledge of the functions of organs, he would become a doctor. Briefly speaking, the perfect knowledge of a thing equips with the power of perfect creation. Furthermore, when a person has perfect knowledge, it means, he is also capable of perfect creation and perfect design and that he dispenses with the need of another designer.

In the abbreviation, the letter ك stands for the attribute, the Sufficer; Allah has hinted thereby that He is Sufficient as much for the creation of men as for their management and equally for planning for their existence, without there being an occasion, or cause or need of a vicarious atonement, or a son or holy ghost, as help.

It can be argued here that notwithstanding our belief that God is the Sufficer, we believe in the angels and in the physical universe, in wind and lightning and matter. The answer is that we accord these things a secondary position

which is far different from that of equality, the secondary position being at par with the status of servants. God has made a particular order to keep Himself invisible to the view. If belief in Him was to be productive of results and we were to be rewarded for it, it was imperative that the person of Allah, the Almighty, should remain behind a veil. For, belief in visible objects can earn one no approbation. We see the sun; we believe in its existence, but we are not rewarded on that account. Similarly, the mountains are visible objects and we do believe that they are very much there, but we get no reward for that.

SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL AGENCIES

Since the creation of man called for perfection of spirituality which depends on divine approbation and keenness of spiritual insight, therefore, trials and ordeals should naturally interpose as necessary adjuncts to refinement and evolutionary progress, for, trials and ordeals are experienced, usually, in the attainment of difficult objectives. It was, therefore, essential that the person of God should remain hidden, otherwise the scheme laid down for the spiritual progress of mankind would have failed. And with an invisible God, it was necessary to have some physical as well as spiritual means of seeking to conform to His will. The spiritual agencies

consist of the pure constitution of human nature besides angels. The material means comprise matter and the law of dynamics. Therefore, the existence of angels or matter gives no cause for criticism. Christianity ascribes equal partners to God. We have only servants and subordinate agents. The latter is a necessary means so that the person of Allah, the Excellent, remains inaccessibly high and immeasurably distant and that a wall intervenes between God and His servants, which, only one who strives in His way, may be able to breakthrough. In short, the one who knows of the source of life and has knowledge of the extant is alone the All-Powerful Being. In like manner, the righteousness of God is a guarantee of the salvation of the devotee.

If a man cannot be saved without vicarious atonement, then all the previous Prophets turn out to be liars, and the God Who sent them shares the epithet. For, Adam came and required men to believe in him. Noah came and asked people to accept his word. The story of Adam does not occur in detail in the Bible. In the case of Noah, the Bible goes into detail and says that Noah invited people to believe in Him. If man could not be saved without vicarious atonement, both Noah and the person who deputed him were liars. Then came Abraham making the same offer to men to accept the truths he had brought. The story of Abraham, however, is as sketchy in the Bible as that of Adam. But, following this, the story of Moses is

recorded in great detail. The Bible says that he put before the people his teachings, warning them of God's wrath if they rejected it and assuring them of salvation if they observed it. He did not say that he had been propounding to them his teachings, which were, nevertheless, impracticable, like the Christians who assert that the law was far from practicable. Moses did not say aught but that if they observed the law, they could rest assured of salvation. Therefore, if the Christian doctrine is true and salvation is beyond the range of possibility, then Moses was an impostor who cheated people by telling them that if they obeyed him, they would be saved. But if he was a Prophet as the Bible claims, in that case, God Himself cannot escape the implication that He was equally a liar, Who sent him with that message. By the same token, all the Prophets who came after Moses turn out to be liars, for, each of them claimed that observance of his teachings ensured salvation. It is said that David (peace be on him) proclaimed:

> "And the law is the truth."
> (Psalms 119:142)

IS LAW A CURSE?

If, however, *Shariat* (law) is impracticable, since the Christians rate it as a curse. One must agree that truth is impracticable and that, on the contrary, only falsehood

is practicable. It must be further admitted that truth cannot lead to salvation, but falsehood does. To revert to the point, if we agree that man cannot conform to the law and cannot follow the Prophets, then the conclusion that the entire chain of Prophets is a big lie becomes inescapable. But if He is the Truthful God, then there is no denying the fact that salvation is a possibility, for, all the Prophets of God announced that salvation could be the lot of men, if they cared to obey them.

Besides, the Arabic word صدق (truth) also carries a sense of perpetuity in addition to veracity. In fact, it also applies to what is everlasting. "The truthfulness of Allah, the Almighty," which implies that His person and His law are everlasting. In other words, the word, as well as the act of God, are everlasting, and they can be so only if man also was immortal. If mankind is not worthy of salvation and must perish, then we are led to the conclusion that neither the word of God nor His actions are immortal.

MAN IN GOD'S IMAGE

Perfect truth, therefore, evidently must find its reflection, for, truth, as aforesaid, implies perpetuation which is inadmissible without a corresponding eternal grace inhering in Divine attributes. The Bible also supports

our view. It says,

> "God created man in His own image."
> (Genesis 1: 26-27)

The image of God, the Almighty is far from the nose, the ears, eyes, and mouth like ours. All that it means, thereby, is that the attributes of God can be reflected in man. If it is correct to say that God made man in His image and since He is the Righteous, it follows that man is capable of cultivating in himself righteousness, truthfulness, and piety. Otherwise, we are forced to the conclusion that the intention, as well as the act of God Who is the Righteous Lord, ended in failure and man, because of the impurity of his nature, turned a devil. Clearly, therefore, a religion that claims that man was born with a nature tainted with sin, says, in other words, that God intended but failed to make anyone in His image; He created Adam in His image, but Adam became a sinner. The position is thus reduced to this: Either the image of God the Excellent is imperfect, or He failed in His aim; and that Satan poached His first as well as His latter fruit-yield and even turned on His last fruit, i.e., the Messiah, involving him in the trial. Is not such a belief derogatory to God the Almighty and a reflection on His righteousness? While God claimed that He made man in His own image, it so happened that the first man looks after Satan by minding his word. His future generation got involved eternally in

hereditary sin, following in the footsteps of Satan, and the Redeemer Messiah proved so weak that Satan was induced to tempt him too. (Matthew 4:1-11)

QURAN ON SALVATION

In contrast to it, the teaching of the Holy Quran lays down that Allah the Mighty requires no vicarious atonement for the salvation of His creatures; He has made them for the attainment of success and has implanted in their constitutions a virtue loving disposition.

(I) Allah the Almighty observes in the Holy Quran apropos to the Satan's challenge to mislead mankind:-

قَالَ اَرَءَيْتَكَ هٰذَا الَّذِیْ كَرَّمْتَ عَلَیَّ ۫ لَىِٕنْ اَخَّرْتَنِ اِلٰی یَوْمِ الْقِیٰمَةِ لَاَحْتَنِكَنَّ ذُرِّیَّتَهٗۤ اِلَّا قَلِیْلًا۔ قَالَ اذْهَبْ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَاِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَآؤُكُمْ جَزَآءً مَّوْفُوْرًا۔ وَاسْتَفْزِزْ مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَاَجْلِبْ عَلَیْهِمْ بِخَیْلِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكْهُمْ فِی الْاَمْوَالِ وَالْاَوْلَادِ وَعِدْهُمْ ؕ وَمَا یَعِدُهُمُ الشَّیْطٰنُ اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا۔ اِنَّ عِبَادِیْ لَیْسَ لَكَ عَلَیْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ ؕ وَكَفٰی بِرَبِّكَ وَكِیْلًا۔ رَبُّكُمُ الَّذِیْ یُزْجِیْ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ فِی الْبَحْرِ لِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِیْمًا۔ (Bani Israil 17:63-67)

When Adam was created, and Satan incurred Divine displeasure following his refusal to obey and serve him, he said that if given freedom of action till the Day of Reckoning, he would mislead the entire generation of men who had been given precedence over him, except a few.

It clearly shows that according to the version of the Holy Quran, even Satan would not claim that all mankind was sinful as the Christians hold; (Christians are at liberty to question it). In fact, far from venturing to denounce all men as bad, Satan agreed that some would still remain free from his influence.

The verse لَاَحْتَنِكَنَّ ذُرِّيَّتَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا is very clear on the point that this view-point is so very erroneous that even Satan dare not say that all mankind was wicked and in fact admitted that some would remain immune against his overtures.

Says Allah, the Excellent:

اذْهَبْ فَمَن تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَآؤُكُمْ جَزَاءً مَّوْفُوراً۔

i.e., Go hence, whoso of them obeyed thee, of his free will, shall be punished, and frighten them or beguile them by thy voice and bear on them with thy horsemen and thy footmen and make them partners in goods and progeny and hold out the promise to them; وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ إِلَّا غُرُوْرًا i.e., and Satan ever holds out false promises... But I say that while thou hast challenged that thou shalt annex to thyself mankind, I declare that whoso turned to Me, thou shalt not succeed in tempting him: إِنَّ عِبَادِيْ لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ — and whoso puts himself in the care of God, can anyone enjoy a greater protection than such a one?

وَكَفٰى بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيْلًا ۔ رَبُّكُمُ الَّذِیْ یُزْجِیْ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ فِی الْبَحْرِ لِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِیْمًا ۔

i.e., And your Lord is the One Who steers your boats safely across the ocean so that you may seek of His bounty and Allah is the Most Compassionate.

PURITY OF HUMAN NATURE

These verses put forward the Quranic claim regarding the purity of human nature. If it is pure as described, it has, of certainty, the inherent strength to combat evil successfully.

And if a man can conquer evil, there is no room for vicarious atonement. On the contrary, the effort of pure nature and repentance, meriting, as a result, the mercy of God, are sufficient for the attainment of salvation. A close study of the above verses shows that:—

(l) The hope expressed by Satan signifies that according to the Holy Quran, belief in the wickedness of man is a belief ascribable to Satan. Islam not only rejects this belief but describes it as Satanic, and even Satan does not say that he would corrupt all mankind; he only says that he would corrupt *most* of the human race.

(2) Secondly, the Holy Quran says that Allah told Satan to try and that He would not stop him from doing so. He

made man with the aim that he should combat him (the Satan) and should try to activate goodness in himself. He (God), however, told Satan that he would be able to influence man only through an external agency, for, in his constitution, He had made him pure.

SIN AND HEREDITY

Christianity claims that sin is inherent in man and has been transmitted to human progeny through heredity. If it is true, the impulse to follow Satan should originate in the human heart. However, Islam declares that the human heart is pure; in fact, it declares that even the heart of the man who goes over to Satan is pure:

وَاسْتَفْزِزْ مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَاَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِمْ بِخَيْلِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكْهُمْ فِي الْاَمْوَالِ وَالْاَوْلَادِ وَعِدْهُمْ ؕ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا۔ (Bani Israil, 17:65)

اِنَّ عِبَادِيْ لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ۔ (Al-Hijr, 15:43)

i.e., Beguile them with thy voice and bear on them with thy horses and thy footmen, whoso of them thou wishest; that is, entice them through people in power or seduce them through the underlings and whether thou hold out to them the temptation of wealth or progeny, there will be no effect whatever on My servants.

In verse, the influences that vitiate the human character have been enumerated. Not one of these originates in the heart. On the contrary, all have external sources and tend

to degrade man. For instance, it has been said to Satan that he would beguile man through music or by means of threats, as, for instance, if the man spoke the truth, he would run the risk of hanging or of being imprisoned. Further, He (God) pointed out to Satan that he would dangle before man the temptation that if he did not gorge himself with dirty money, he would live in poverty and that if he wanted to advance his fortune, he should accumulate ill-gotten wealth. Similarly, He pointed out that Satan would next persuade the man to raise parties or factions; and would incite him to deceit, telling him that if he did not, he stood no chance of succeeding; and he would then hold out to him promise of manifold achievement on the condition that he resorted to falsehood, deceit, artifice and cheating. All these things are external. If human nature was impure, there was little cause for referring to these matters. All that Allah, the Excellent, then had to declare was that since Adam had sinned, the man was guilty. But all the things that the Holy Quran has listed as vitiating the nature of man and leading him to sinful conduct are extraneous; such as

(1) music

(2) threats—that is, for instance, inciting men to oppress the followers of the Prophet lest they should advance their cause

(3) greed and covetousness.

EVIL AN EXTERNAL INFLUENCE

In short, in these verses, Allah the Excellent has pointed out that he (the Satan) would have to adopt external agencies to incite man to sinfulness, which means that intrinsically man is secure. But the origin of inherited sin is internal; it does not enter from outside. For instance, a person through sucking at the breast of a consumptive mother in his infancy, absorbing thus the germs of T.B. would be said to be suffering from an internal disease should he fall prey to it. On the contrary, another person who contracts this disease through contact with a consumptive patient during attendance on him, the germs of the disease having found their way in him through the exhaled breath and clothes of the patient, he will be said to have been a victim of these externally, while the former contracted, the malady internally. There are similarly many other maladies that children inherit from their parents. One such disease is hysteria. Generally, the children of epileptic parents fall prey to spasms of epilepsy. The same is true of lunacy. We have observed cases in which lunacy was transmitted to as many as three generations in succession. As a man cannot live long, therefore, an extended experiment is not possible in this connection. But it is quite possible that with the establishment of an institute for conducting research in this behalf, this malady may be observed to go down as far as seven to eight generations. One form of syphilis is

transmitted to as many as seven generations. In fact, in recent literature issued in Europe on the subject, I have read of cases where symptoms of this disease have been traced to as many as twenty generations though they differ significantly from the symptoms in the early stage of the disease. In short, this malady runs through the coming generations. Now this disease has not entered from outside. Its germs exist inside the patient. When weakness and debility overpower the mind, then either the nose-bridge would subside or some other symptom would appear, indicating the presence of the disease inside the body. But if the malady attacks from outside, for instance, a child whose father was not syphilitic but the child contracted the disease through contact with a patient in such a manner that he caught the disease, then in such a case we would not say that he inherited it from his father. However, we would say that he contracted it from outside. Similarly, all the agencies of evil listed by the Holy Quran are external. It did not say that since Adam had sinned, Satan will succeed in making him sinful. On the contrary, the Holy Quran said that he (the Satan) would tempt him and infuse fear and awe in him and invite him to an easy life of song and music and thus make him corrupt. In other words, all the agencies of evil are external and not internal. This is followed by another Divine observation:[1] إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ

1 Bani Israil, 17:66

i.e., Thou canst not have upper hand over my servants who keep contact with Me. Neither temptation nor fear will influence them. وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلًا[1], i.e., thy Lord is Sufficient as the Guardian of His servants.

When one comes under the protection of God, the Almighty, Satan cannot lay hold on him, for, he has entrusted his affair to God, the Excellent. Hereby, the use of the word گَفَىٰ (Kafa), the meaning propounded by me has been clearly indicated. I had explained that the letter ك (K) used here stands for the attributive Divine name کافی (Kafi). Allah, the Excellent, has pointed this out here and by employing the expression گَفَىٰ (Kafa) indicated that this *Surah* comprises a reference to the Divine attribute کافی (Kafi), the Sufficient. When one hands himself over to God the Excellent, then as the Provider of means, God, the Almighty, is sufficient for him, and Satan can no more take hold of him.

WHAT IS SIN

If every human being were impure on account of hereditary sin, as Christians claim, then men would have inevitably faced perdition in spite of virtuous deeds and notwithstanding their entrusting themselves to God, the Great. But it does not so transpire, which goes to show clearly that sin is the crop of external influence, and

1 Bani Israil, 17:66

human nature is pure by itself.

God, advancing a supporting argument next, says:

رَبُّكُمُ الَّذِیْ یُزْجِیْ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ فِی الْبَحْرِ لِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِیْمًا[1]

i.e., You regard sin a dangerous typhoon, a devastating calamity, and you think it is inherent in man and he cannot be freed from it. But God says, sin is nothing in itself. All this is conjecture. As an obvious example, there is the sea. You see boats plying in it, (Steamships ply now carrying cargo from one country to the other. In former times sailboats were the vogue, which depended for their movement on the wind). God says that boats are dependent on the wind, but wind turns at times into a typhoon when it exceeds a limit. When sailboats used to ply, if it were proposed to the world to stop the wind so that typhoons might be stopped, there would have been a universal outcry that typhoons were rare occurrences and, therefore, they should not be stopped, for in that event their trades would come to a standstill. If out of thousands of boats, one gets lost in the storm, the loss is insignificant. Citing this instance, Allah, the Excellent, has pointed out that what people call sin is, in fact, an "excess," i.e., going beyond limits. Just as winds that move boats from one end to the other, turning at times into storms, so do the powers, which inhere in man for his progress and benefit, getting out of control

1 Bani Isra'il, 17:67

assume the form of sin. In other words, sin is a storm of passion. Excess of wind beyond a limit is termed typhoon. Its tempo below a certain limit is useful and produces beneficial results. As an example, take the eyes of man which God, the Almighty, gave man to see and which serve him day and night. If a check-up were made even in the case of the worst character, of the total of his activities of a single day, to see how many times he misused his eyes, it would be found that he made proper use of his eyes some two hundred times and improper use of them but once. He was engaged in house-cleaning for a time; he met with friends somewhere and was at work labouring with industry. All these chares he did with his eyes putting them to proper use. But once a while, he happened to ogle at a strange woman. If his eyes were dead, he would, undoubtedly, not have been capable of this improper act, but he would not be able to do a proper deed either. God, therefore, says that the popular conception of sin is wrong. The definition of sin, as conceived by people, is erroneous. It is understood to be a bad thing in itself, while the truth of the matter is that it is only the deficiency or excess of powers created in man for his progress and benefit that makes a sin. As, for instance, extravagance is the extreme form of charity, and niggardliness is the extreme degree of the desire to conserve the property. The world has little chance of prosperity without the elements of charity and saving.

Similarly, the term adultery applies to improper use of sexual power, and the absence of its exercise is termed celibacy. If the exercise of sexual power were suspended, there would be no means of continuing the race, and if it were left unchecked, there would be no means of preserving health.

In short, in these verses, Allah, the Excellent, has expounded the philosophy of sin and stated that the creation of man is pure, vice is external, and the assertion that the majority of men will live a sinful life is a satanic view.

(2) The following verse further explains this postulate. God says:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ فِيْٓ اَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيْمٍ ۔ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنٰهُ اَسْفَلَ سٰفِلِيْنَ ۔ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَلَهُمْ اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُوْنٍ ۔ فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِالدِّيْنِ ۔ اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِاَحْكَمِ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ۔

i.e., We gave man the finest powers and then We at times pull him down and down. (At-Tin, 95:5-9)

Here a Christian would at once confirm and say that he holds the same view, namely, that Adam came with the potentiality to make spiritual progress, but because of his sin human race fell down the scale.

In order to dispel this notion, God says that the entire human race is not involved in this down-grading; on the

contrary, those who kept to good deeds they held fast to the excellence of their natural constitution endowed with beautiful impulses; only the section that had departed from the path incurred punishment and seceded from the party of the Prophets. The above verse points out that the group mentioned in اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ (those who believed and practiced good deeds) belong to the party of the Prophets and their virtues and errors are the results of positive action on their part, neither being hereditary. The crux of our challenge to Christians is whether the followers of Prophets can or cannot be saved without believing in vicarious atonement. Their answer is "No." But the Holy Quran says that the virtuous believers, that is, those who act according to the teachings of the Prophets, will have an eternal reward. Therefore, the concept that sin is inherent in the man is erroneous.

CONSCIOUSNESS OF GOOD AND EVIL

Here the Christians can object that their theory rests on the sinfulness of human nature making virtuous acts on his part an impossible thing and that therefore, the law is a curse.

(3) The Holy Quran observes in this connection:

وَنَفْسٍ وَّمَا سَوّٰهَا۔ فَاَلْهَمَهَا فُجُوْرَهَا وَتَقْوٰهَا۔ قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا۔ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰهَا۔
(Ash-Shams, 91:8-11)

viz., We cite the evidence of human nature and the fact of its endowment with the finest powers. سوی (*Savva*) signifies a condition without crookedness in it and تسوية (*Taswiya*) means making level, without excess or shortage. مـا (*ma*) in وَنَفْسٍ وَمَـا سَـوّٰهَا, is infinitive and the verse would thus mean: "We cite as evidence the human nature (mind) and its creation with the finest powers, suffering neither from excess nor from shortage." اَلْهَمَهَـا فُجُوْرَهَـا وَتَقْوَاهَـا i.e., when We created him, We inspired his mind (nature) with an understanding of what would be its sins and what would be its virtue; viz., what is فُجُـوْرَ (*Fujur*) that is, what would deflect it from the course, and تَقْوَاهَـا (*Taqvaha*), i.e., what are the ways that would lead it to Divine nearness.

This verse shows that Allah claims that human nature is straight without any crookedness-is good and has no wickedness. Secondly, it has not only an evenness in its constitution but it is also endowed with an innate sense of good and evil; in other words, God has placed in it a conscience which knows the path of virtue from that of vice. A stick planed to evenness does not know that it is smooth. But a man knows what virtues inhere in him. Or, for instance when a man has one rupee in his pocket, it can be said in his case that he is not penniless; but if he does not know that his pocket holds one rupee, he will not make use of it.

Here two points have been brought out. Firstly, that Allah made every man free from every kind of crookedness. Secondly, not

only He made man pure (in nature) but also imparted to him the knowledge of what in him would lead to vice and what would be a virtuous act. In other words, he is not only pure but also knows how he has to make use of the powers inherent in him, and he has a conscience which knows that a certain act would be sin and another a virtue.

In the verse, قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا ۔ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰهَا, the point has been further elaborated i.e., He attained to fortune who kept it (nature) pure.

In other words, it means God did not endow it with evil. Therefore, the man who does not let it vitiate and keeps its purity untarnished, is a highly successful person. And one who crushes out its purity and tramples under his feet its goodness is an unlucky person and a failure.

(4) God further commands:

سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْاَعْلَى ۔ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَ فَسَوّٰی ۔ وَالَّذِیْ قَدَّرَ فَهَدٰی ۔ وَالَّذِیْٓ اَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعٰی ۔ فَجَعَلَهٗ غُثَآءً اَحْوٰی ۔ سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسٰٓی ۔ اِلَّا مَا شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ یَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا یَخْفٰی ۔ وَنُیَسِّرُكَ لِلْیُسْرٰی ۔ فَذَكِّرْ اِنْ نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرٰی ۔ سَیَذَّكَّرُ مَنْ یَّخْشٰی ۔ وَیَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْاَشْقَی ۔ الَّذِیْ یَصْلَی النَّارَ الْكُبْرٰی ۔ (87: 2-13)

O man! glorify thy Excellent Lord.

Here a question arises, how is one to know that the Lord is the Excellent. Says the Lord in answer, الَّذِیْ خَلَقَ فَسَوّٰی (He made man and made him free from all crookedness).

وَالَّذِیْ قَدَّرَ فَهَدٰی (He then set a limit to man's progress), فَهَدٰی (and laid the rules for attaining to different stages, that is, if one wanted to be an ordinary *momin* (believer) there was a particular course, and if one wanted to be a high-class believer, there was a particular way he should take to, and so is the case with regard to the stages of *Shaheed* or *Siddiq*. In other words, قَدَّرَ فَهَدٰی speaks of the different spiritual grades laid down by Allah, the Excellent for man prescribing at the same time the way to work to that end.

In fact, اَلَّذِیْ خَلَقَ means اَلَّذِیْ خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ, for, the entire context is related to man. For instance, here "Guidance" has been mentioned. It is evident that "Guidance" is for men and not for trees, nor for beasts. He, therefore, says-men cannot know the law of God in respect of themselves nor what laws are in respect of the other creatures. He draws man's attention to crops and vegetation: وَالَّذِیْٓ اَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعٰی ۔ فَجَعَلَهٗ غُثَآءً اَحْوٰی, pointing out that they become totally useless and black after a time and are reduced to naught. But compared to these, the spirit of human goodness endures. We cannot partake of the fruit of last year. But the teachings of Adam are still extant. So are the teachings of Noah, of Abraham, of Moses. It is dear that there are different laws governing different spheres. If it is a dirty thing, there is no significance in prolonging its existence; it has not any utility to be kept alive for thousands of years. About the teachings of Adam,

Noah and Abraham one could also say that there were no means of knowing whether they gave the teachings ascribed to them or whether another teaching was imparted by them. He says: سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَىٰ i.e., We shall impart to thee a lesson which thou wilt not forget; إِلَّا مَا شَآءَ اللّٰه i.e., except what thy Lord says in respect of a command that it was of a temporary nature and should repeal it afterwards (an instance in point is that prayer used to be addressed with the face turned towards the Holy Land but later Allah commanded that it should be addressed with the face turned towards the Holy House at Mecca) and excepting such ordinances of temporary character, We are going to give you a set of teachings فَلَا تَنْسَىٰ i.e., which thou shalt not forget. Here it is not the Holy Prophet (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) alone who is addressed, nay the entire mankind has been addressed. And Allah, the Excellent says that this teaching will never be forgotten, howsoever, men may contrive. He will uphold it and you will realize that it takes notice of their innermost thoughts and at the same time takes into account the external events that influence their deeds. وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ i.e., in the dissemination of this teaching, We will provide many facilities and it will continue to spread. If law is a curse, well ! We are sending down a teaching and we will see whether it is acted upon or not. فَذَكِّرْ إِنْ نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ i.e., these arguments, that We have advanced, show that hearts of men can be reformed

through law and with all that partakes of it, and therefore, thou shouldst have recourse to it. سَيَذَّكَّرُ مَنْ يَّخْشٰى i.e., when thou wilt put this teaching to them, those, who have fear of God in their hearts, will certainly benefit by it.

This again indicates that virtue, and not sin, is hereditary, for, heart is the source of the fear of God. And one, who has put himself to hardship, will try to by-pass it.

وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْاَشْقَى ۔ الَّذِیْ یَصْلَی النَّارَ الْکُبْرٰی ۔

This part of the verse shows that sin is due to man's own doing, nature of every man being otherwise pure in itself.

(5) Further, God says:

اَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ عَیْنَیْنِ ۔ وَلِسَانًا وَّشَفَتَیْنِ ۔ وَهَدَیْنٰهُ النَّجْدَیْنِ ۔ (90: 9-11)

i.e., does not man reflect that We gave him eyes. Man may assert that he is sinful. He may claim that his sinfulness is hereditary. Did We not give him eyes? Did We not give him a tongue? Did We not give him a pair of lips? If man could not profit thereby and his salvation was contingent upon vicarious atonement, then why We gave him eyes and why does he then see! And if his heart was impure and he could not cleanse it of impurity through exchange of views with a knowledgeable person, then wherefore did We give him a tongue, wherefore did We make for him a pair of lips? Besides, God, the Almighty has placed a conscience in every man which weighs good and evil.

If he could not weigh good or evil wherefore the need for a conscience? The theory of vicarious atonement is like throwing a stone in a pit and then believing that the act would assuage one's hunger. An idea is tenable only when it is susceptible of a logical conclusion. When an idea does not lead to a logical conclusion and when it is apparent that it serves no useful purpose, one should ponder whether it has any utility. If salvation of mankind was bound up with vicarious atonement, then where was the point in providing man with eyes, with a tongue and with pair of lips?

PECULIARITY OF QUR'AN

God next proceeds to say: وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ i.e., then We showed to him both the ways.

It is a peculiarity of the Holy Quran that sometimes it puts a vast meaning into a small word. The Holy Quran makes mention of 'way' in several other places but sometimes it uses the word سبيل (*Sabil*) for it and at others it employs the word طريق (*Tariq*). In this case Allah the Excellent has used the word نجد *(Najd)* in preference to the words سبيل *(Sabil)* and طريق (*Tariq*). This shows that the subject has to do with the word نجد (*Najd*) as against the words سبيل (*Sabil*) and طريق (*Tariq*).

We find in the dictionary that the word نجد (*Najd*)

stands for a steep way comprising ascent. In another place the Holy Quran observes that a man finds an uphill way difficult to negotiate. He suffers from heavy breathing and his feet get blisters. It is this condition to which, Allah the Excellent has made a reference here. Obviously, as has been explained in فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ, the highway in a physical sense is not meant here. For, the context that follows says: the man did not give alms, nor charity, nor did he care for the orphans and the destitute. This clearly therefore, establishes that the highway referred to here is not in a physical sense. On the contrary, the two ways, stand for the way of virtue and the way of sin.

As a rule, what one gets through heredity does not call for any hard work. For example, our eyes are a hereditary gift. We had no hand in the matter. We, therefore, have to undergo no exercise in seeing with our eyes, nor does the process entail any labour or hard work. We start seeing automatically. Similarly, the tongue is a hereditary gift to us and speech is an automatic function with us. Or, look at hands and feet; they start moving of their own accord, for, we received them as hereditary gifts.

VIRTUE AND VICE SELF-ACQUIRED

If sin were an hereditary acquisition, it should have not entailed any physical exertion on the part of man and thus the way of sin would have not been an uphill task.

For, the powers that are transmitted through heredity call for no exertion. But Allah says that He made two uphill ways. That is to say, that if one wanted to keep up virtue, he would have to exert himself for it and if he chose to persist in sin, he would likewise have to put in effort in that direction. Therefore, neither virtue nor sin is a hereditary gift. One has to exert in acquiring them. In other words each is self-acquired. If sin were transmitted through heredity, neither the first lie nor the first theft would call for any exertion. But when one speaks his first lie, his face becomes pale and similarly, when one commits his first burglary, he goes about hiding and it so happens that his movements, very often betray him, making people suspect him of the offence. A story very much in currency in our country of a Brahmin accidentally killing a cow is an illustration in point. Under the law in force at the time, a Brahmin found guilty of killing a cow ran the risk of capital punishment. This Brahmin, therefore, leaving the dead cow looked up in his house made off. Wherever on the way he came across men in twos and threes engaged in talk, he would walk up to them and ask what they meant by their reference to the cow. They would invariably deny that they had made any mention of the animal in the course of their talk. He would protest saying it was not so and that they were only hiding the fact from him and would insist that it was certainly the topic of their conversation. He would then proceed further

and would on encountering another two engaged in talk, ask what was it that they had just said about the calf. If they replied that they had had no word about it, he would insist that there was definitely something of the sort in their mind. The result was that he had hardly reached the other end of the street when he was suspected and ultimately hauled up by the people. A search of his house revealed the carcase of a cow. Admittedly, whenever one commits his first sin irrespective of its nature, his conscience upbraids him and he feels ashamed. A thief feels out of sorts after committing his first act of burglary and so does a highwayman after his first case of brigandage. If sin were hereditary, the way to sin would not be an uphill one and it would not call for an ascent.

(6)Again, God says: قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِيٓ أَعۡطَىٰ كُلَّ شَيۡءٍ خَلۡقَهُۥ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ i.e., Moses (peace be on him) said to Pharaoh: Our Lord is the One who endowed every object with powers according to its capacity and directed it to the means of its progress. (Taha, 20:51)

Here the words أَعۡطَىٰ كُلَّ شَيۡءٍ خَلۡقَهُۥ are inclusive of the creation of man. The Bible, too, says that man has been created to seek communion with God and he is blessed who hears His commands and acts accordingly. (Proverbs 8:34)

COERCION RULED OUT

(7) God accordingly says:

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَاٰتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدٰهَا وَلٰكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّيْ لَاَمْلَئَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ اَجْمَعِيْنَ۔

i.e., if we had so desired, we would have granted every soul its guidance (32:14). Apparently, the content of this verse is contradictory to that of the preceding verses but in truth it is not so.

Allah the Excellent does not say: وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَهَدَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ But even if He had uttered these words, the content would have not been contrary to that of the preceding verse. On the contrary the words here are هُدَاهَا i.e., every soul that we have created, We have placed in it the means of his guidance. Some persons however throw away this guidance. Had We so wished, We could have forced back on them this guidance? But since coercion would defeat the object of the creation of man, We therefore, did not employ force.

This is yet another argument in favour of the thesis that the human mind has been created pure and every man is sent out with the light of guidance inherent in him. But some persons force it out through their own folly and ignorance. In this context, God observes: Had We wished We could have given back to them their internal

guidance? i.e., they would have not been empowered to reject guidance. But those who abandoned the guidance inherent in their nature, We passed the sentence of punishment against them though We very much liked them to be recipients of our guidance. Pointing this out, God observes:

وَلٰكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّيْ لَاَمْلَئَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ اَجْمَعِيْنَ

i.e. We made man so that through his misdeeds he goes over to hell; though We had made ample provision for his guidance.

(8) Similarly, He says: وَاُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ i.e., We have made Paradise easy of access to the God-fearing (26:91). In other words, on the one hand their nature directs them to paradise, and on the other, the help of God, the Almighty guides them to it; thus both the internal as well as the external guidance incline them towards paradise.

PROJECT OF HUMAN CREATION

(9) Again, He says: وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ i.e., I created not jinn and man but that they should serve Me (Adh-Dhariyat, 51:57). The object of the creation of mankind is thus laid down that they should become عبد, i.e., His worshipping servants. In another place, the Holy Quran says in amplification of the status of (عبد) the worshipping servants:

يٰٓاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ۔ ارْجِعِيْٓ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً۔ فَادْخُلِيْ فِيْ عِبٰدِيْ۔ وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ۔

i.e., O thou contented soul that has found tranquillity in attachment with Allah the Excellent, return to Thy Lord in such a state that thou art happy with Him and He is pleased with Thee (89:28-31).

"Thou art happy with Him and He is pleased with Thee" is the state when man becomes pure and his heart cultivates such a degree of holiness that endears him to Allah the Excellent.

فَادْخُلِيْ فِيْ عِبٰدِيْ

He next observes that when one reaches the stage where he attains to his happiness in God and God, the Almighty is equally pleased with him, such a one, as a reward of it, be comes a servant of Allah the Excellent. In other words, he attains to the objective laid down in the verse:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ

i.e., I created not jinn and man except to serve Me. And who attains to the object of his creation, he necessarily, becomes deserving of the command: وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ "and enter the paradise of Allah the Supreme."

The above verse shows that the object of the creation of mankind is that they should become the servants of Allah. And who would dare repudiate the object of

human creation laid down by Allah the Almighty?

Allah has not merely stated this as the aim of human creation; He has gone a step further. He has declared that such men will be born among the human species as would achieve that end, and giving them the glad tidings, He says: "O thou the contented soul come back to thy Lord while thou art happy with Him and He is pleased with thee, join therefore, my servants and enter my paradise."

STATE OF CONTENTED SOUL

Here another subtle truth has been hinted at; it pertains to the condition of the contented soul رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً the one with whom God is pleased and who is similarly, happy with his Lord. About the companions of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings), He observes:

رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوْا عَنْهُ

i.e., Allah was pleased with them and they were happy with Him (98:9). This verse would in the light of the verse,

يٰٓأَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ....جَنَّتِيْ

read like this:

يَاأَيَّتُهَا الْجَمَاعَةُ للصحابة....جنتی

clearly these verses of the Holy Qur'an bear testimony to the fact that the companions of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings) had attained to the state which qualifies one for admittance among the servants of God, the Supreme and for fulfilling the object of his creation through inheriting His Paradise.

ERROR OF ADAM NOT PREMEDITATED

(10) Another verse which elaborates this point occurs in the Holy Quran in the context of the incident that happened to Hazrat Adam (peace be on him). Allah, the Supreme says about Hazrat Adam (peace be on him): فَنَسِيَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا i.e., the error of Adam arose out of a misconception and was not premeditated (20:116). Errors are of two kinds:

(1) Arising from misunderstanding and (2) premeditated. Both are again divided into several categories. Allah has described his error as arising out of a misconception and not intentional. Adam (peace be on him) had no mind to commit the error but it so happened. It is a self-evident truth that sin has two aspects, one is internal and the other external. What deprives man of salvation is the internal aspect of sin. There is no gainsaying the fact that some men incur manifest punishment for sin. But what

deprives men of salvation is nevertheless, the internal aspect of sin and not its external aspect. As for instance there is the sin of theft. Theft consists in taking away the property of others. It happens times out of number that one takes hold of a thing belonging to another person by mistake. The case of persons whose feet lack instinctive sensibility is in point. They get off wearing the shoes of others by mistake. Suppose such a person were apprehended and prosecuted before a court and sentenced to undergo imprisonment, he would suffer the manifest punishment of sin, but his heart will not be affected with darkness, for the simple reason that he did not lift the shoes with intent to steal.

A remote nephew of the Nizam of Hyderabad came to see me in Qadian. He wanted me to pray for him for a particular object. It occurred to me that since men of his position seldom come over willingly, I should avail of this chance to counsel him. I invited him to have his evening meal with me and exhorted him till late in the night. I asked him if he was observing Prayer. He said he was used to praying now and then while at home but since, during the course of journey, it was hard to maintain the standard of cleanliness, therefore, prayer could not be observed. I told him that he had lot of money and that even at that time he had brought with him no less than half a dozen servants and if that was his condition what about the poor who were no more

obliged to observe Prayer than he while he enjoyed so many facilities in comparison; he had his berth reserved in the train and enjoyed reclining there at ease, "What would you say to God, the Almighty? What would be your excuse for failing to observe prayers?" A poor man could very well say that he was angry; "Allah has not been solicitous about me so much, wherefore should I worship him!" Even though his answer is a silly one but still it is an answer but what would he have to say, I asked him.

I found that he looked like one deeply moved and promised to observe Prayers regularly. We broke up the party at about 12 in the night and he departed for his lodging. On reaching there, he commanded his servants to wake him up for the morning Prayer. "I have been put to great shame today and if he would want to know whether I had offered my Prayers, I would have no answer if I missed it." His servants said to him that it was 12 in the night already and far too late for him to be up early, as, even if he went to sleep at 9 o'clock it was not his wont to be awake early in the morning. He told them that they should in any case wake him up failing which he threatened to punish them. Accordingly, the servants awakened him in the morning. The poor fellow was not used to observance of prayer. But nevertheless, he got up as his servants aroused him from sleep, and started towards the mosque half-asleep. On the way when he

would stumble; his servants would run to steady him. He reached the mosque somehow and managed to say his prayers while yet in a sleeping state. After prayers as he started to go, he left his shoes there and being overpowered by slumber, started out with somebody else's tattered shoes on his feet. When he had covered half the distance, a servant happened to see the mistake and called out in surprise "Nawab Sahib, you are wearing somebody else's shoes." This opened the eyes of the Nawab too and casting a glance at his feet, he said "go ye hence and change the shoes lest any one should accuse me of theft."

Because of this incident, I learnt in the morning that he had, in compliance with my advice, offered his prayers in the mosque and being under the influence of overpowering sleep had missed his own soft and comfortable shoes and started back with an old and tattered pair of shoes belonging to someone else. Now, it is evident that no Nawab has a mark of identity inscribed on his face. Suppose the owner of the shoes had turned up and seizing hold of the Nawab by the throat threatened to hand him over to police on charge of theft, he might have been punished but this error would not stand in the way of his salvation, for it had not been committed with intent to steal.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ASPECTS

Let us take another instance. The two diseases syphilis and gonorrhoea are generally considered to be the harvest of sin. But it is possible that the sin was not committed by the patient and was committed by his father or grandfather. Take the case of a man who marries the widow of a syphilitic from whom she had contracted the malady. Now the second husband is definitely exposed to attack through contact with her and would thus land himself in trouble. His suffering is manifestly a punishment for adultery but he will not go to hell on account of this nor will his heart grow dark; on the contrary it is quite likely that it may become purer than ever on account of it. What darkens the heart is the internal aspect of sin. The harm accruing from its external aspect is a temporary phase and has no lasting ill-effects.

In the case of Adam (peace be on him) Allah says, "We did not find in him the element of pre-determination." That is to say that his error was on account of a misunderstanding, as is clear from the Biblical quotations about Satan persuading him to believe that it would be a good thing on his part, if he ate of the fruit and that thereby he would gain insight to discriminate between good and evil. Adam thought over it and voted for its correctness and thus fell into error. His mistake was clearly the result of a misconception and not premeditated.

SINS ARE FORGIVEN

(11) Again, Allah the Supreme says in the Holy Quran:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا

i.e., On true repentence Allah doth indeed forgive all sins (Az-Zumar, 39:54).

The Bible may hold the view that sins are never forgiven. We are not concerned here whether the Biblical thesis is correct or the Quranic thesis. What we are concerned with here is the Quranic stand on the point. The Quran holds that repentance is followed by forgiveness. Evidently, therefore, when sins have been forgiven, punishment is automatically waived.

(12)The Holy Quran further says:

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّتَانِ

i.e., Whoso has in his heart awe of the station of His Lord is awarded two heavens, one in this world and the other in the next (Ar-Rahman, 55: 47). Now it that heaven in this world does not comprise worldly goods. If mundane goods were meant to be the award, there has been many a good man of God in a much inferior position in worldly circumstance than many a disbeliever. Even the common labourer in Europe today wears better and eats better than did the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah

be on him). If heaven in this world stood for mundane gifts, then without the least question, the labourer of today's Europe is in heaven and the great reformers and saints, God forbid, are out of it. Heaven, therefore, means in this context spiritual tranquillity and its award means the seeking of His nearness. The word of Allah: وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ جَنَّتَانِ (whoso fears God is a favourite of Allah in this world and would be granted near association with Him in the next), clearly signifies that the capacity to attain nearness to God, the Almighty inheres in every man. If sin were hereditary in man, he could have no means of attaining access to God.

(13) God similarly says:

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هٰذِهٖٓ أَعْمٰى فَهُوَ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ أَعْمٰى وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيْلًا

i.e., whoso is blind in this world shall be blind in the next (Bani Israil 17:73). It cannot really mean that one who is physically blind in this world will be blind also in the hereafter. It is indeed a great tyranny to condemn to blindness in the next life one who is blind in this life. In fact, what the verse purports to impress is that it is with the spiritual eye that one sees God Almighty and blind are those who do not see Him. The verse:

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هٰذِهٖٓ أَعْمٰى فَهُوَ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ أَعْمٰى وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيْلًا

thus, carries two imports, one negative and the other positive. There are some who are blind and there are

others who are not. For, God says: the one who is blind in this life shall be blind also in the hereafter. It clearly means that some will be blind, while others will not be blind. This verse therefore, clearly points out that the Holy Quran holds that the hearts of some men can become pure. Allah the Supreme stresses here the point that whoso vitiated his heart here would forfeit the capacity to see Him in the hereafter. It shows that the hearts of the entire mankind would not be vitiated.

(14) Similarly says the *Hadith*:

مَا مِنْ مَوْلُوْدٍ إِلَّا يُوْلَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ، فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ يُنَصِّرَانِهِ وَ يُمَجِّسَانِهِ

i.e., Every child is born with a pure nature then his parents through their teaching make him either a Jew or a Christian or a Magain (*Bukhari*, *Kitab al-Janaiz*). This indicates that man is born with a clear nature and that evil takes root in him through environmental influences.

(15) Yet another *Hadith* says that God, the Excellent has made the heart of man pure. In his worldly existence he does an act of virtue or commits an evil. When he does a good deed, a white point appears on his heart and when he commits a sin, a dark spot appears on his heart. And as he progresses in good deeds or evil, white or dark points begin increasing in due proportion, till the whole of his heart becomes either white or black, according to the character of his actions. If his entire heart becomes white, he becomes immune to the influence of evil. But if

the whole of his heart becomes dark, he loses the capacity of virtue. (vide *Tafsir Ibn-e-Jarir*, verse: كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ At-Tatfif, 83:15)

This supports the thesis that man comes to this world with a pure constitution and for a long time his purity of nature remains in good shape. When the whole of his heart grows white and virtue takes firm hold of it, he attains to salvation without a vicarious atonement. But when the whole of his heart becomes dark and vice takes a firm grip on it, no vicarious atonement can be of any avail to him.

CHRISTIANITY ON SIN

Contrary to this, Christianity claims that Adam (peace be on him) sinned and was punished on account of it. His sin was then transmitted through heredity to his generations. Now man cannot by himself escape evil, for it is his heritage. His salvation called for a vicarious atonement which the Messiah (peace be on him) offered; and he took the entire sin of mankind on himself. In other words, according to Christianity, man is born as a slave-boy of Satan and is rescued from his grip through faith in the vicarious atonement offered by the Messiah (peace be on him).

As I have explained above, the Holy Quran rejects the

entire thesis of Christianity in this context. According to the Exalted Quran, sin is not hereditary nor is man sinful by birth, nor does he need any vicarious atonement; human nature has been made pure and it is endowed with capacity to make progress so much so that he can become the favourite of the Supreme Maker; and if he commits a sin, his repentance has a chance of acceptance. Now that we find that the Holy Quran has rejected this Christian thesis and if the Bible likewise does not lend it any support, there is then little ground left for Christians to subscribe to it. On pondering the subject, we are confronted with four questions:

(1) Man inherited sin. (2) Since man inherited sin, he cannot be pure. (3) Man could not be pure but since God Almighty is Compassionate and Merciful therefore, His mercy and compassion called for a sacrifice. (4) That man truly became pure through this sacrifice.

These four questions come up when we consider this problem and it is incumbent on us to seek answers to them.

DID ADAM SIN?

The first point is that since Adam (peace be on him) sinned, therefore, the entire generation of man was tainted with sin, for, it inherited sin from Adam (peace be

on him). Now let us see whether Adam really committed sin and whether the Old and the New Testaments support this theory. If, however, the Bible does not find Adam (peace be on him) guilty of sin, the entire theory is knocked out.

So far as I can understand, the Bible has clear evidence to prove that Adam (peace be on him) did not sin. From the Bible, I am led to the conclusion that even the Satan did not sin. My study of the Bible shows further that neither Adam nor the Satan sinned; it was no other than God Himself, who sinned, (may Allah keep us from entertaining such thoughts). I propose to adduce the necessary evidence below:

The incident of Adam (peace be on him) is narrated in the Genesis. [It should be remembered in this connection that the Bible is the collection of books beginning with the story of Moses (peace be on him) to that of Jesus (peace be on him) and ending up with the Apostles. From Moses (peace be on him) to Prophet Malachi the entire collection is termed the Old Testament. According to Jews only the Old Testament forms the Scripture. According to Christians both the Old and the New Testaments comprise the Scripture. The Old Testament consists of five books of Moses (peace be on him). Of these, the first is the Genesis which also makes

mention of Adam (peace be on him)]. Says the Genesis:

> "And the Lord God planted a Garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." (Chapter 2, Verses 8 & 9)

Here the Bible asserts that after the birth of Adam (peace be on him), God, the Excellent planted a garden in Eden wherein He grew all kinds of trees and in the middle of the garden He planted the tree of life and of discrimination between good and evil. I will elaborate it elsewhere whether the tree of life was a different one from the tree of discrimination between good and evil or the two are really one and the same tree. I think the two trees were not separate but a single and identical plant. But the Bible is very hesitant and undecided on the point, showing the two sometimes as one and at others as two distinct trees.

THE FORBIDDEN TREE

Further, it says:

> "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
> (Genesis, 2:16-17)

In other words, God planted in the garden of Eden all kinds of trees, with the tree of knowledge in its mid-centre and told Adam (peace be on him) to partake of the fruits thereof except that he was forbidden the tree of knowledge and that if he partook of it, he would die instantly. Continuing, the Bible mentions Eve having said:

> "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." (Genesis 3:3)

In short, firstly the statement of the Bible says that God warned Adam against eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge as otherwise he should die instantly. This is further supported by Eve who confirms that Allah had in fact, forbidden them the fruit of that tree and even

forbidden their going near it as they would die if they did so.

Now the Satan (the Bible has used the word serpent for Satan) approaches Adam (peace be on him) and says, in the words of the Bible,

> "For God doth know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes will be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5)

WAS ADAM AT FAULT?

An examination of these verses shows that the fault lay neither with Adam (peace be on him) nor with the Satan but entirely with God, (we seek the protection of Allah against such views). These verses show that the tree under reference was the tree of life and of knowledge i.e., it was a tree that was life-giving and it was a tree that gave one the power to discriminate between good and evil. But the Bible says that God told Adam (peace be on him):

> "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:17)

In other words, it says God made a misstatement to

Adam (peace be on him). It was the tree of life and of knowledge, but God the Excellent warned that the day he ate of it; he would die. Dying may stand for physical demise or for spiritual extinction. In both the cases, this statement of God, the Almighty is proven baseless. If it means spiritual death, it is an untruth. For, the gift of knowing good from evil is a means of sustaining spiritual life and not the cause of spiritual death. If it means physical death, this is again wrong. For, it was the tree of life eating whereof would not cause death. In short, the God of the Bible deceived Adam when he told him not to eat of the tree which was the life-giving tree and the tree of wisdom. Eve also testified that God the Supreme had warned:

> "And the woman, said to the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the tree of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, ye shall not eat of it nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die."(Genesis 3:2-3)

It is evident that God Almighty made a misstatement and deceived Adam. (Allah protect us against such views). As against this when Satan said to Adam:

> "For God doth know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened,

> and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5)

There was nothing false about it. The tree had both the properties; it was the tree of life as well as of knowledge. That is, partaking of it gave life and also it gave the power to discriminate between good and evil. Thus Satan did not mislead Adam. It was God, as Bible would have us believe, who deceived him. Do we, on going further into this question, see that after eating, of the fruit of that tree, Adam and Eve died? They did not die. On the contrary they lived and the word of Satan "you will not die" came true and the word of God that "the day thou ate of it thou wouldst die" did not come true. Again, as the Bible says, after eating of the tree they began to know good and evil. According to the Bible, therefore, no fault lay with Adam, nor any blame attached to the Satan; God Himself was responsible for misleading them. Adam (peace be upon him) tried to discriminate between good and evil and to become a man. No one under the heavens would call it a sin. Adam tried to cultivate virtue and Satan warned him that God was misleading him when He had said that by partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge he would die, while he (Satan) pleaded Adam would not die but live and have the power to know good from evil on partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The Bible confirms that after eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree they grew wise and began to know evil from good.

None sinned therefore, at any rate, neither Adam nor even Satan. God of the Bible alone sinned Who by calling the tree of life, the tree of death, misled Adam into believing that he would die after eating of its fruit. This death either could be physical or spiritual. He was wrong on both scores. They could not incur physical death, for it was the tree of life, and they could not die spiritually either, as it was the tree of knowledge, that is, it was a source of a new spiritual life for man.

Here Christianity cannot claim that God the Father made the misstatement and God the Son did not. For, God, in Christian terminology, stands for the Tripartite godhead. God the Father is not distinct from God the Son nor is the latter distinct from the Holy Ghost. If, therefore, God the Father made a misleading statement, it means that the other two, the Son and the Holy Ghost shared the blame. If therefore, sin was transmitted through heredity, then on the authority of the Bible, we are led to the conclusion that Adam did not sin, but God sinned, and, in other words, Jesus sinned in that he made a misleading statement for which he should take the entire blame.

In final analysis, God, the Supreme has been portrayed in such nasty colours by the Bible as make His picture a repulsive and regrettable sight. In the face of these texts Jesus cannot lay claim to the title of saviour. How can

one, who makes misleading observations and indulges in deception, be a redeemer?

ADAM CREATED TO IMBIBE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

Another argument that extenuates the sin of Adam is that he made it on account of mis-judgment. The Holy Quran stresses this very point. Even if we place our reliance on the Biblical version, we find that Adam erred in good faith:

> "So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them." (Genesis 1:27)

Man whom God made in His own image includes both the male and female of the species. Both man, the male and his female—the woman—have been created in the image of God. This cannot mean that God has nose, ears, and eyes and other limbs as human beings have. All that it signifies is that the attributes of the Supreme Creator were incorporated in Adam (peace be on him). Thus when God, the Almighty made man according to His own image and told him that he had been created to radiate His attributes, it could not but happen that Adam would imbibe the attribute of discriminating between good and evil.

What Satan told Adam, therefore, was in effect: "God has made you the radiator of His attributes. One of the Divine attributes is His Power of discriminating between good and evil. As God knows good from evil, so, should you know good from evil. And the only way to do so, is that you should partake of the fruit of knowledge. And if you would not eat of it, you will have no means of knowing good from bad. And through lack of knowledge of good and evil, you will not become the perfect manifestation of Divine attributes. It is, therefore, imperative that you should partake of its fruit; in other words, become like God by eating its fruit or, in still better language, if you will eat of the fruit of this tree, you will have attained the object of your existence for which God made you." Suppose it all happened in this manner; if Adam was thus led to an error of judgment, would any blame attach to him? A person walks up to Adam and says: "Look, you know you have been made in the image of God and you know that all that this means is that you should become a mirror of Divine attributes and you also are well aware that knowledge of good and evil is one of His attributes. If you will eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, you will have achieved the purpose of your existence and become the mirror of the attributes of the Supreme Creator."

It was such a forceful argument that Adam wilted under its weight and made an error of judgement taking the entire story in good faith. I will go to the extent of saying

that even today, notwithstanding the trick imposed on Adam, many people will fall prey to a similar deception, if they are approached in the above manner, in the belief that God had willed that they should eat of the fruit of the tree and had never meant to forbid it. The Bible, thus, supports the view that there was the possibility of Adam being led to an error of judgement. Even according to the Bible, knowledge of good and evil is a Divine attribute:

> "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil..." (Genesis 3:2)

Here the Christians interpret "Us" as standing for the Tripartite godhead. According to Jews "Us" stands for God and His angels; for, as God knows good from evil so, do the angels. According to the Jewish view-point, it would mean that Adam started knowing good from evil as does God and as do His angels. According to Christian viewpoint it would mean that Adam started knowing good from evil even as does God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Ghost do.

The above reference shows that knowledge of good and evil is a Divine attribute and whoso has that knowledge, he becomes like God or takes after His image or as the Bible would have it, assumes the image God made him in the likeness whereof.

TREE OF LIFE

Incidentally, I would like to say in this context that the Biblical view about the tree of knowledge is strangely enough rather ridiculous. According to Genesis 2:9, it was one and the same tree. It is said:

> "And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

Here the word used is in the singular and not in the plural which goes to show that an identical tree had both the qualities. Partaking of it gave life and also it gave knowledge of good and evil.

Verse 17 reads:

> "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shall not eat of it."

This again, points to the conclusion that there is only one tree which had been forbidden to Adam. Had there been two, the prohibition should have extended to both. But He forbids only one tree which appears to be the tree of life as well as of knowledge. But Verse 22 of Chapter 3

(Genesis) reads:

> "And the Lord God said, Behold the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever."

Now here we have two trees, one of knowledge of good and evil and the other that of life. Since Adam partook of the tree of knowledge and started to know of good and of evil, God ousted him from the garden of Eden lest he should partake of the tree of life and inherit eternal life.

IS DEATH CROP OF SIN?

Again, Genesis (2:17) shows, death had not been appointed for Adam before he sinned. For, it is written: "For, in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." It meant that if Adam and Eve would not eat of it, they would not be liable to death. Death was, therefore, an outcome of the act of eating of the tree. Had they not partaken of it, they would not have been liable to death. Similarly, it is further said: "And the serpent said to the woman, ye shall not surely die." (Genesis 3: 4)

This again shows that death has been related to partaking of the fruit of the tree under reference. The same view is upheld in Romans (Verse 12 Chapter 5). It reads:

"Wherefore, as by one-man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so, death passed upon all men, for that will have sinned."

Again, according to Jacob (1:15): "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

These references lead, on the one hand, to the finding that according to the Bible, eating of the fruit of the tree would make Adam liable to death, while the tree was life-giving and partaking of its fruit would not kill a man but would perpetuate his life; on the other hand, as stated in the Romans and in Jacob death was the crop of sin. In other words, if Adam and Eve had not sinned, they would not have died. Coupled with the contents of Genesis, Verse 22, Chapter 2, it makes amazing reading. It says that God expelled Adam from the garden of Eden lest he should eat of the tree of life and live for ever. In the event of death being the crop of sin, since he had become a sinner by partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, even if he ate of the fruit of the tree of life umpteen of times, this could not have sustained his life.

Therefore, it should be admitted that death is not the harvest of wrong-doing and that partaking of that tree bestowed life. On the contrary it is averred on the one hand that death is the harvest of sin and, on the other, the Bible maintains that God, the Supreme turned

Adam out of the garden of Eden lest by eating of the fruit of the tree, he should live for ever. It is clear, therefore, that death is not the crop of sin, and on the contrary man could live after partaking of the forbidden fruit even though it be a sinful act.

VICARIOUS ATONEMENT UNCALLED FOR

Yet another question confronts us. It is said about Adam that he sinned though neither his father nor his mother had sinned.If a child can sin, notwithstanding the fact that his parents did not, then a child can likewise do an act of virtue, notwithstanding the fact that his parents did nothing of the sort. And if Adam (peace be on him) could act virtuously what is there to prevent other men from acting in like manner? Evidently the theory of heredity is not a fact in this. God, the Excellent has made man so, that he is capable of making progress and is likewise liable to fall. Adam's father had not sinned. In fact, he had no father. But Adam sinned. This goes to prove that virtue and vice are products of given circumstances and unrelated to heredity. Vicarious atonement is clearly, therefore, an uncalled for device.

Another question that arises is: How was the sin of Adam forgiven? If it was forgiven on repentance, in a similar manner the sin of his generation could be written off and

there is thus hardly any room for vicarious atonement to serve any purpose.

In short, the entire foundation on which the edifice of vicarious atonement has been raised, and on the basis of which Christianity claims that since man cannot save himself, on his own, from sin, a belief in vicarious atonement is essential, is found to be unreal on the evidence both of the Old and of the New Testaments.

ALLEGORIC NARRATIVE

Again, it appears from the Bible that the whole of this incident relating to Adam takes the form of allegory and there is evidently no sense in basing a religious believe on its foundation. For, the Bible says that when Eve ate of the fruit and gave it to Adam:

> "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." (Genesis 3:7)

Becoming nude after partaking of the fruit of the forbidden tree is clear evidence of the fact that the incident is narrated in the form of an allegory. It is again

averred:

> "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." (Genesis 3: 7-8)

The above words further lend strength to the fact that the whole affair is treated in allegoric form. God is the Creator of cold and of heat and stands in no need of these. He has not to go out in cool weather to save Himself from heat as some men move to Quetta and Murree during summer. The Bible, however, says that seeing that the hour was cool and the sun had not yet risen, God took to strolling in the garden so that he may not be exposed to the inconvenience of warm weather. This is clearly an allegoric statement and couched in idiomatic language. Similarly, it is said:

> "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, where art thou. And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." (Genesis 3:8-9)

This again is an allegoric description, for, nothing is hidden from God, the Supreme. The Holy Quran confirms that there is naught in the heavens nor in the earth hidden from Allah, the Mighty whether on the surface or under the subsoil all are in His knowledge.

But the Bible says that Adam and Eve hid themselves in the dense grove of the garden so that God the Excellent may not be able to see them. The very words underline its allegoric character.

Yet another statement only speaks of the limitation of the knowledge of God, the Great:

> "And the Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him, where art thou?"
> (Genesis, 3:9)

In other words, the Lord who know 'every particle- of the earth and of the heavens, and whose knowledge comprehends everything, started shouting "Where art thou O Adam." It is clear that this language is allegoric. For, God sees everything from His throne seat. If He does not, then how is He managing to superintend their affairs? The Bible, however, insists that when they hid themselves in the garden, God, the Almighty started hailing,

> "Where be thou O Adam? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." (Genesis 3:10)

There is really no sense in Adam believing that as he had no clothes on, he could conceal himself from the eyes of God, the Almighty, by hiding himself in the garden.

In short, this reference clearly shows that here it is not meant to relate a real episode but that the subject has been treated in an allegoric form and described in idiomatic expression. All parables and allegoric descriptions are as a rule susceptible of interpretation. This is no exception to the rule, being in no way a factual incident.

We hold, therefore, that the language on which this belief has been based is entirely allegoric, as for instance, the assertion that Adam sinned and his heart became dark or that Allah the Supreme walked in the garden or His coming for a stroll in the cool hour, His not being able to see Adam and then His calling him by name. All this is clearly allegoric language and the rest of the incident is by the same token a parable. It is clearly foolish to base a religious belief on such foundation.

Again, as I have explained above, since Adam could sin while he had neither a father nor a mother, it shows that both virtue and vice owe their origin to given environmental conditions and are similarly, liable to elimination. If virtue cannot invade from outside, neither can sin. If sin could invade the heart of Adam while he had no parents virtue cap likewise the heart of his descendances. The same rules shall apply to both.

WAS ADAM FORGIVEN?

Again, it is clear from the Bible that Adam remained pure in spite of his sin. Why it so happened, say the Christians, because his sin was forgiven. So, could the sin of his generation be forgiven, is our contention, without the necessity of a vicarious atonement. In order to fortify the theory of vicarious atonement or to prove that the mind of man had become vitiated beyond reform, it is necessary to establish that after the fall of Adam, man became so degenerated that he could not have recourse to virute. If the evidence of the Bible leads to the conclusion that man really could not take to virtuous life after Adam had committed, sin, then as the Bible holds forth, various atonement must necessarily be accepted as admissible. But if the Bible itself supports the stand that man did not become degenerate after the sin of Adam and did not lose hold of virtue, the very foundation of the atonement theory is knocked out. (It should be clearly noted that the Holy Quran does not characterize Adam's incident as an act of sin)— If man could remain virtuous without an atonement and also abstain from sin, nothing extraneous seem to be called for his salvation.

We quote below from the Bible in this respect:

> "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's

> transgression who is the figure of him that was to come." (Romans 5:14)

Here "that was to come" stands for Messiah (peace be on him) and his 'like' means Adam. It is averred that death laid its hand on all from Adam to Moses who had not sinned like Adam (the like of Messiah). In other words, Paul admits that there had been many from Adam to Moses who had not sinned. This clearly establishes that man can shun sin. The Bible is very clear on the point that there had been born many men after Adam who did not sin. It is strange, however, that since this theory was made in utter consternation, at the spur of the moment, to meet criticism following the crucifixion of Christ, apostles have been found to be in considerable confusion about it and have, therefore, made different statements on different occasions. As for instance the above quotation clearly shows that there, had been a lot of men after Adam who did not indulge in sin which, in other words, means that, notwithstanding the fact that Adam committed sin, sin was not transmitted to his generations through heredity. But in the same chapter (Romans 5:12) of the same book, it is said:

> "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

That is to say that Adam's sin was punished with death and because of Adam, death became the lot of all men, for, they all had sinned.

> "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Romans, 5:13)

This means that Paul was blowing hot and cold in the same breath when in the same chapter he wrote that since all had sinned, death became the lot of mankind (the Christians believe that death is the harvest of sin). But in the following verse (14) of the chapter under reference, he says; "Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression who is the figure of him that was to come."

LAW AND SIN

Here another difficulty was encountered, namely that according to Christian belief, rule of the law started with Moses and did not exist before him. And when there was no law in force what was the place of sin? The question has been met with the answer:

> "For until the law sin was in the world but sin is not imputed when there is no law."(Romans 5:13)

Evidently, according to them, law and sin are two separate things. Quite so. We are in complete agreement with them in this view. The law forbids a particular, thing in so many words, as otherwise, men will have incurred the displeasure of Allah the Supreme. And it is a sinful act on the part of person to do what men have been clearly forbidden. Sin is thus not accountable before the enforcement of law. So far the position is tenable. But whether the law is there or not, a bad act is bad, in any case. For instance, when the Holy Quran was revealed, it forbade injustice, rating it as an enormous sin. We, therefore, accepted the position that injustice was not a desirable thing. But if this command had not been given by the Holy Quran, still an unjust person would be guilty of a wrong. The same applies to other wrongs. Even if the law had not been revealed, wrongs would be wrongs, with the only possible difference that some would denounce a wrong act as wrong and others would not. A section might describe a particular act as virtuous while others might not share their view. The sense of wrong and the sense of right are not related to law but inhere in human nature. Paul expressed the same view when he said that there was sin in the world but it was not accountable, because the law was not in force and thus the idea of sin did not exist. We hold the same view. Where the law is not in force, a wrong would be a wrong, but it would not be an accountable sin in terms of *Shariat* (Law).

For example, the law of Shariat does not exist in a certain place and people naturally do not offer the currently prescribed prayer. Suppose those living in jungles or on distant mountains do not know of the heavenly appointment of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him). Allah the Excellent will not require of them why they did not observe the prayers prescribed by Islam nor would He require of them why they did not observe the fast prescribed by Islam, for the obvious reason that they did not know of this particular prayer and this form, of fasting. The *Ahadith* (Traditions) are very clear on the point and say that four types of people will be exempt from legal account-rendering on the day of Judgement (1) the born deaf, (2) the demented, (3) the senile and (4) all those to whom the message of Islam did not reach. For the test of such people another prophet will be commissioned to them and in the event of their accepting him, they will be saved, and in case they rejected him they would be punished (*Ruhalmaani*, Vol. IV, under the verse 17:16 – وما كنا معذبين حتى نبعث رسولا)

Apart from this, the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) has adduced supporting evidence from the Holy Quran to the effect that such people shall be judged in the light of the natural human instincts and not in terms of the laws laid down in the Holy Quran. They will be judged by the sense of values implanted in the nature of

every man. Human nature in itself judges some acts as sinful independently of the light of guidance the Shariat (Law) proffers to man. A well- known incident related by Khalifa-tul-Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him) is an apt illustration. A thief came to him for medical advice. He exhorted him to desist from eating unlawful property as looting other people's goods was a wicked thing. Hearing this he said back that his advice was nothing better than priestly tall talk; that none earned his bread the harder way than men of his calling; that he (the Khalifatul-Masih I) was making easy money by way of fees earned through a simple pulse-examination, while the thieves shivered in cold and risked their very necks in the job: that on the one hand they were in constant fear of the police and on the other of being apprehended at every step and yet they faced all these hardships and earned their money by literally exposing themselves to death. Could there be a better-earned income, the thief asked? The Khalifa-tul Masih I (Allah be pleased with him) changing the topic soon engaged him in talk on some other subject. Then after a while he asked him how they used to plan a burglary. He replied that some seven to eight persons usually took part in the operation. One remained on the look-out of the house and gave information as to its property-contents. Another was an expert wall breaker. One stood guard outside. Two men stood sentry at the two ends of the lane. One was at

hand to enter the premises. A well-dressed person stood far away from the scene of theft and all loot was brought over to him, so that if someone chanced to see him with the goods, far from being suspected, he should be liable to be taken for the owner of goods. All the rest had their bodies well-oiled and wore only a short light loin-cloth and did their assigned duties. Ornaments were passed on to a goldsmith who melted the gold and handed it back to the gang and it was then divided among all the members.

Thereupon the Khalifatul Masih I (peace be on him) asked him that if the goldsmith ate up all the ornaments what they could do. He unconsciously ejaculated "will he be so, dishonest as to gorge up the property of others?" The Khalifat-ul-Masih I (Allah be pleased with him) then told him that it appeared there was some distinction between honesty and dishonesty even in his mind and that even his conscience felt what was virtue and what was a wrongful act. The Promised Messiah (peace and the blessings be on him) says in effect the same thing when he observes that such people will be tested by their natures. Allah the Excellent will not require of them why they did not offer the prayers prescribed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him). He will require of them whether they had done the duty of worship in accordance with their nature's urge of dutiful worship of a deity. The same applies to

acts like perjury, theft and brigandage. One may indulge in misappropriating other people's property taking it as a normal thing but when another person lifts his property, he calls him a crook. This goes to show that, in his heart of hearts, he knows that misappropriation is an act of dishonesty. It is true that such a one cannot be called a sinner in terms of the Shariat law, but, he will be guilty in terms of natural impulses and will meet his deserts. But the point is, if this is a correct stand, where does then the need for atonement arise?

LAW AND SALVATION

If the New Testament had asserted that human nature was a curse in itself, this would be a tenable theory. But it says, the law is curse (Galatians, Ch, 3:13). In other words, the New Testament does not find fault with the judgment of human nature condemning a particular act as sinful; but it says that law is a curse, in that it bears such commands as people do not find practicable, and it claims that Jesus, therefore, scrapped it. But the question here arises that the law was in abeyance even before the advent of Moses (peace be on him) and man needed no atonement for salvation; he could either attain salvation by acting according to his nature or incur punishment by acting against it. Where is the need then for a vicarious atonement under the circumstances?

On recapitulation, the true position turns out to be that by enforcing the *Shariat* law through Moses (peace be on him), Allah put men to hardship. But vicarious atonement was not the remedy of the situation. The true remedy lay in scrapping the law. This may be a very foolish step but so far as the remedy was concerned, this alone was appropriate. For, according to Romans we are led to believe that there was no law before Moses (peace be on him) and the people could not be judged as sinners in terms of law, and since they were not sinners in the aforesaid sense, the law could not punish them. Further, according to the same source, there were people who did not sin, that is they were not guilty of offending nature.

All the above-quoted references show that the whole trouble arose not on account of the sin of Adam (peace be on him) but on account of the Divine mistake (Allah save us from such beliefs) of sending a law through Moses (peace be on him): when people could not act according to its commands and the question of their punishment came up, Allah sent the Messiah and abolished the law for good through him.

There was hardly any need for sending out Messiah for the purpose. The God Who gave the law to Moses (peace be on him), could very well declare through Joshua (peace be on him) its abrogation on the ground of its impracticability.

SIN AND DIVINE JUSTICE

Another question arises here. If sin is committed but is not accountable, where is the justice of God? Justice is the second pillar of the theory of vicarious atonement, and it is asserted that if God did not punish men for their sins, he would not be just. The point here is that the mere change of label does not change the reality of a thing. A person commits theft, but we say, there would be no punishment for him, as the law of Moses is not there yet. As against him there is another person guilty of the same offence. We declare him to be an inmate of eternal hell, for the simple reason that the law of Moses finds him guilty. The nature of the act is the same; this one lifted property as did the other. We do not declare the act of the first as an offence, as the law of Moses (peace be on him) is not there yet, but we condemn the other, for the simple reason that the law of Moses (peace be on him) is in force. We leave alone the one and arraign the other while both have committed the same act. Where lies the justice and whence the equity that permits this?

Let us take another instance, that of lying or of oppressing others. If we do not forbid these acts or do not condemn a person for lying or oppressing others, how can one who commits these acts be a righteous and clean-minded person? How can a thief, a liar and a wrong-doer become righteous minded, for the simple reason that we did not

restrain them, or that we did not condemn them? And if one is not guilty but the other is, on account of the same acts that both have committed, justice obviously loses its foothold.

ENOCH—A RIGHTEOUS MAN AFTER ADAM

So far I have dealt with the subject in terms of principles in a philosophical strain. Now I propose to show that in the world of actualities too, as the Bible points out, there have been appearing men of virtue from time to time in the world. It is said of Enoch, great-grandson of Adam (peace be on him) and great-grand-father of Noah:

> "And Enoch walked, with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years. And Enoch walked with God and he was not; for God took him."
> (Genesis, 5:22-24)

The above-quoted reference shows that Enoch walked with the Lord. It does not mean that Enoch and God went out to travel together as people generally do on trips to America or other countries. He would not thus be said to have been doing sight-seeing with God, the

Almighty for some three hundred years. This in fact, is an idiomatic way of Biblical expression meaning that Enoch was a virtuous man and had imbibed the attributes of God. That is to say that his acts were patterned according to the works of God; he was exceedingly compassionate, generous in treatment, affectionate and loving to mankind, was just and equitable and took care of the poor. Similarly, he had in him the other attributes of God—Cherisher, Beneficent, Merciful, Master and Forgiving. And, next, that he was taken to the heavens—that is he completely resembled the Messiah and held the position that the Messiah enjoyed. In fact, the Messiah was vouchsafed only thirty years of life, but Enoch lived as long as 365 years, living a good and righteous life.

It shows that Enoch, the great-grandson of Adam (peace be on him) and great-grand-father of Noah (peace be on him), was so good that he was, so to speak, like God and that he was ultimately taken to heaven. When read together with the Messiah's observation:

> "And no man hath ascended up to heaven,
> but he that came down from heaven, even
> the son of man which is in heaven."
> (John 3:13)

The status of Enoch is further illuminated and we are led to the conclusion that Enoch had come from heaven and had, therefore, gone up to heaven. In fact, it means that

only those people go to heaven whom Allah takes under His care from their childhood, keeping them under His protection and control. Enoch was one of those who are brought up under the shadow of the grace and mercy of God the Great and who in the words of the Bible, are taken up to heaven.

MELCHISEDEC

In far grander terms even than Enoch has been related the story of Melchisedec. The New Testament also confirms it. According to the Bible, when Abram (peace be on him) was persecuted in Iraq and his cousins put him to torment, God, the Almighty commanded him to migrate to Palestine. So far only Lot (peace be on him) had believed in him. He took Lot (peace be on him) along. His wife also accompanied him. On the way, travelling through Egypt where he married Hagar (Allah be pleased with her), Abram (peace be on him) reached Palestine. He had been foretold that he would find asylum there and would have a following. When he settled down in Palestine and the neighbouring kings found him gaining popularity among the masses, they went to war with him. Abram (peace be on him) sallied forth in defence and put them to defeat. After defeating them, as he was returning, king Melchisedec met him. He was considered to be highly virtuous, pious and

saintly man of his time. Abram (peace be on him) offered him a tenth part of the booty. Melchisedec declined to accept the offer saying that he was in no need of money but asked Abram (peace be on him) to hand over to him the captives of war. But Abram (peace be on him) insisted on giving him the war booty lest people should say that he owed his wealth to Melchisedec. It is evident that Abraham (peace be on him) owed allegiance to Melchisedec (Genesis, 14:18-24): "And Melchisedec, king of Salem brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth. And he blessed him, and said, blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth. And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. And the king of Sodom said to Abram, give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine lest you should say I have made Abram rich: Save only which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Esehol, and Mamre: let them take their portion." The New Testament is more explicit on the point; "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of

Melchisedec." (Hebrews 6: 20)

Here Paul addressing his people says that, "To whom also Abram gave a tenth part of all. First being by interpretation king of righteousness and after that also king of Salem which is king of peace, without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning nor end of life but made like unto the son of God abideth a priest continuously."

Melchisedec declined to accept the money-offering, saying that while other people were subject to death, as for instance, Moses (peace be on him) came and died, David (peace be on him) came and passed away and Solomon (peace be on him) came and died, but Melchisedec did not die; nor in the same way did Messiah die. It is further said:

> "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God who met Abram returning from the slaughter of the king and blessed him" (Hebrews 7:1)

That is Melchisedec gave his blessings to Abram (peace and the blessings of Allah beon him). It appears he considered himself to be greater than Abram (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him). For, the Bible did not say that Melchisedec prayed that God may bless Abram (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) but wished blessings in his goods, in other words, he blessed him.

And it is said: "First being by interpretation king of righteousness and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace."

It is further said:

> "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God: abideth a priest continually." (Hebrews, 7:1-3)

It means that Melchisedec had neither father nor mother; was everlasting and eternal like the Lord—God; his age neither had a beginning nor an ending; neither was he ever born nor would he die at any time; he lives for ever and ever more and is like the Son to God the Great, as the Messiah is, from eternity to eternity (not the Messiah who was born of Mary but the Messiah who is one of the Three), so is Melchisedec eternal and everlasting, without a beginning and without an ending.

It is clear that there was in the world one more person who was righteous and so exceedingly righteous that he was the king of truth and peace and it befitted him to give his blessings to Abram (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him).

ZACHARIAS, HIS WIFE AND JOHN

The Bible says about Zacharias and his wife:

> "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (Luke 1:6)

Further, the angels said to Zacharias (peace be on him) in respect of John:

> "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." (Luke, 1:15)

Evidently, therefore, it meant that the Holy Spirit will not descend on John after his mother had delivered him but that it would descend on him and will take hold of him while he was yet in his mother's womb. There is no gainsaying the fact that sinfulness begins after one is delivered of his mother's womb but one who is taken hold of the Holy Ghost when he is yet in his mother's womb, can never fall a prey to sin.

In short, even John was free from sin and vice as the New Testament says. In fact, the Messiah (peace be on him)

went so far as to declare:

> "Verily I say unto you; Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."
> (Matthew 11: 11-12)

He thus showed that John was far superior to him, for, Messiah was also born of a woman as was John.

The above references show that both Zacharias (peace be on him) and his wife, were, according to the Bible, pure and flawless and observed the ordinances of God the Supreme.

Similarly, John was filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb and was perfect, without a blemish. Now when John, Zacharias and his wife could be free from sin, by the same rule, why the other people could not be similarly, free from sin? When practically there have been before the Messiah and before his vicarious atonement took place, such people as were virtuous, pious and flawless and observant of the ordinances, the inference is clear that the righteous existed in the world even without atonement. And when righteousness could be sustained in the world without atonement once, it could continue to abide in a future period of time as well, and there remained therefore, no necessity for any redemption.

PROPHECIES RELATING TO ISHMAEL

The question, how some of the preceding generations were saved, and how it was that there had been pious people in the past, is sometime met by the Christian clergy with the answer that they had become righteous and worthy of salvation through faith in the vicarious atonement offered by the Messiah. This answer is on the very face of it a clear stunt. They base their argument on the premises that the advent of the Messiah (peace be on him) had been foretold by Abram, David and some other prophets (peace be on them), but there is no trace of a reference to Messiah in the prophecies made by Abram (peace be on him). This stand is totally fictitious. All that Abram (peace be on him) said was that his progeny will be blessed and that through them God, the Almighty would manifest His holiness. Evidently this prophecy relates to Abram's (peace be on him) progeny and is not specifically related to one person. The prophecy holds true in the case of Ishmael (peace be on him), an exalted prophet of God. It holds good also in the case of Isaac (peace be on him), another exalted prophet of God. It equally applies to Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David and Zacharias (peace be on them). Prophecies of some other prophets no doubt speak of a Messiah but there is a world of difference between a prophecy about the advent of a person and a prophecy about the appearance of a Son of God who would atone for the sins of others

but through whom there would be no salvation. The advent of almost all coming prophets has been foretold by the predecessor-prophets. The advent of John had been foretold and so had been the coming of David and similarly, of Jesus (peace be on them). But this hardly argues in favour of the suggestion that their advent was foretold in the terms that salvation was contingent on faith in their atonement.

WAS MESSIAH OF ABRAM'S PROGENY?

However, even if it is conceded that the prophecy made by Abram (peace be on him) about his progeny implied that there would be a son born to him in the distant future who would be the cause of the salvation of man, it would not apply to the Messiah (peace be on him), for his whole claim rests on the assertion that he is the Son of God. Christianity condemns the generation of Adam as sinful and one sinner cannot carry the burden of the other. It is, therefore, necessary to find someone outside the generation of Adam (peace be on him). It, therefore, puts forth the claim that God, the Almighty sent Jesus Messiah, His only Son, so that he may atone for the sins of mankind. If Messiah was the Son of God, he could not be the son of Abram (peace be on him). If he was a son of Abram (peace be on him) he could not be the medium of atonement, for he was not the Son of God. An attempt

to relate the prophecy of Abram (peace be on him) to Messiah knocks down the whole edifice of the theory of atonement.

I well remember, I was yet a boy, about seventeen years old when I went to Lahore and felt tempted to have an exchange of views with some Christian clergy. I went to see the Bishop of Lahore who was later appointed Principal of the Saharanpur Mission College. I asked him how people of the preceding generations attained to salvation? He said that they believed in Jesus and through their faith in him were saved. I said, "If I were to assert that they were saved through faith in me what would he suggest for an answer?" He replied back that such a claim called for a prophecy to support it. I conceded his point but wanted to know which prophecy was related to the Messiah. He cited the prophecy made by Abram (peace be on him). I said he could have before him all the prophecies made by Abram (peace be on him). If, on the one hand, they speak of blessings in the generation of Isaac (peace be on him), they, on the other, say the same thing about the progeny of Ishmael (peace be on him). "If you feel entitled to apply the prophecy to Messiah (peace be on him), why should we not apply it to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) for he was of the progeny of Ishmael (peace be on him)." Then I asked him to first answer the question whether the theory of atonement rested on the

basis that Messiah was the Son of God. But, I added, if he were a son of Abram, there could be no point in favour of the said theory. He was an aged man, some 55 to 60 years old but my question caused him no ordinary headache. In the end, after an hour's argument, he apologetically said that according to a Greek proverb every fool could put a question but it needed a wise man to answer. In other words, he told me that I was a fool and that he himself was not wise enough to answer every question. I was young in those days and hardly in a mood to take it quietly. I retorted back that I regretted very much that I had come to him taking him for a wise man.

The substance of the whole argument is that if the Messiah was a son of Abram (peace be on him), the atonement theory becomes untenable. But if he was the son of God, the prophecy of Abram (peace be on him) does not relate to him. In either case the objection is there; either the Messiah cannot be a factor of atonement, or the prophecy of Abram (peace be on him) does not apply to him.

There is yet another aspect of the matter. If Abram (peace be on him) has foretold the advent of someone, we have to determine his identity. Abram (peace be on him) foretold the appearance of one from among his progeny. It has been held by the progeny of Abram (peace be on him) that he had foretold the advent of a great man from among them.

Now we find two persons in the world each of whom claims to be answering to the prophecy. Of the two, we ask one his credentials. He says that his father was so and so and that his grandfather was so and so and his great grandfather was so and so and that his great great-grandfather was so and so and that he was begotten of Abram. We next turn to the other and call for his credentials to establish his Abramic lineage. He says that his mother was so and so, she was married to so and so and that her husband was the son of so and so and he was the grandson of so and so and that he was begotten of Abram (peace be on him). Will any sensible man admit the latter's claim to Abram's lineage?

One of the two claimed that his father was begotten of so and so, his grandfather of so and so and his great-grandfather of so and so, tracing his lineage finally to Abram (peace be on him). The other one rests his claim on his mother wedding so and so and that the latter was a descendant of Abram (peace be on him). The claim of the one who traces his line age on his father's side to Abram (peace be on him) will be accepted on all hands while that of the other who bases it on his mother's marriage with one of Abram's descendants would not be entertained. This is precisely the case of Messiah (peace be on him) as against that of the Holy Prophet (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him).

FAMILY TREE OF JESUS

The family tree of the Messiah (peace be on him) detailed out in Matthew, (Ch. 1) and which is termed "the book of the generations of Jesus Christ son of David, the son of Abram," ends up with the words:

> "And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."(Matthew 1:16)

Evidently the family tree of Jesus not traceable to Abram (peace be on him); it is the family tree of Joseph to whom Mary (Allah be pleased with her) was wedded that has been traced to Abram (peace be on him). As against this, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) claimed that his father was Abdullah and his grandfather was Abdul Muttalib tracing his lineage directly to Abram (peace be upon him) and to be a direct descendant of Abram (peace be upon him) has clearly asserted that it was Joseph to whom his mother wedded and not he himself who was of the progeny of Abram. On the contrary, Muhammad the Prophet of Allah, (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) who answers the prophecy, is a direct descendant of Abram (peace be on him) and there is hardly any ground to claim the prophecy in favour of the Messiah.

PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S CLAIM

In so far as the Messiah's claim that he is the saviour of mankind is concerned, a similar claim has been made by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him). Allah the Excellent commanded him:

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللّٰهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوْبَكُمْ

i.e., Tell the people, if you seek to make such spiritual progress that you should become the favourites of Allah, then follow me and subscribe allegiance to me. This will lead to your salvation and will endear you to Allah the Supreme (Aal-e-Imran, 3:32).

In other words, belief in Muhammad the Prophet of Allah (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) will not only save man but lead him to such spiritual development as would endear him to the Supreme Lord.

Again, He says:

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اسْتَجِيْبُوْا لِلّٰهِ وَلِلرَّسُوْلِ اِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيْكُمْ

i.e., O ye believers, accept ye the commands of Allah and of the Prophet, because he is calling you to quicken you (Al-Anfal, 8:25). Here the claim has been made that Muhammad the Prophet of Allah (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) infuses life in men. Since the New Testament asserts that death is the harvest of

sin, these words characterise Muhammad the Prophet of Allah (peace and the blessing of Allah be on him) as the saviour of mankind, and it has been claimed that through allegiance to him mankind can save itself from death which is the crop of sin.

WHY JESUS WAS SINGLED OUT FOR CROSS?

Another question that arises about the atonement is that with godhead being tripartite, why the Messiah was singled out for atonement? Granted that Adam had sinned, granted that the sin of Adam was transmitted through heredity to his children, even though it is a totally silly assumption. Also, granted that hereditary sin is susceptible of no remedy (another silly idea) and that it called for an external remedial measure. Further granted that the atonement is the only remedy that would wash off hereditary sin (yet another foolish idea); though such a remedy would fit in with the idiom in usage in our country, namely "hit the knee, burst the eye." (Someone, it is said, was hit on the knee and started wailing that his eye had been hurt).

To say that sin could not be taken away from the world but the hanging of the Messiah by the Cross took it away, amounts to the same thing. The whole argument is unsound; its parts being in no way inter-related. But

let us grant it and also grant the further argument that a person with Divine attributes alone would serve the purpose. But the question arises why God the Father did not offer Himself for this mission? After all, He has the attribute of mercy too. Or has He not? When God the Father is Merciful to the world beyond comprehension, why did He not offer Himself for atonement? Why did not God the Holy Ghost do so? Wherefore did God the Son alone come forward for the purpose? There can be only two answers to these questions. It will have to be admitted that either the death of God the Father, or that of God the Holy Ghost would have ended in the dissolution of the world and, therefore, God the Son offered to be sacrificed. It will have to be simultaneously admitted in that case that God the Son is an imperfect God and that his death could not, therefore, end in the end of the world and, therefore, it was He who was offered for the job and not God the Father, for, His death would have meant the end of the world.

Yet another explanation is that God the Father and God the Holy Ghost did not love mankind as much as did God the Son. But this would condemn both God the Father and God the Holy Ghost as imperfect and would be inconsistent with the New Testament which declares "God is love"(Corinthians II, 13: 11). In short, either God the Son appears to be imperfect and a surplus being whose death could not affect the world as against God

the Father whose death would be catastrophic for the universe, or if God the Son had perfect love for mankind, God the Father and God the Holy Ghost would have to be judged as imperfect. In any case, either of the three members of Trinity would have to be considered as imperfect, and all religions are agreed in the stand that an imperfect being cannot be God.

ATONEMENT AND JUDAISM

Yet another question presents itself: Does Judaism regard atonement to be an imperative doctrine? In our opinion the Bible does not regard it as necessary, for the simple reason that atonement would be called for only when sin was unforgivable. The Bible, however, declares that sins are forgiven; the entire text of the Bible is permeated with teachings about forgiveness and it is replete with teachings about sacrifices that are accepted by the Lord God. In fact, the Bible lists people who were born after Adam (peace be on him) and whose sacrifices were pleasing to God and He granted them the favour of His nearness. It says:

> "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of

> the fat thereof, And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering:
> But unto Cain and to his offering he had no respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." (Genesis, 4:3-7)

The above references show that (l) notwithstanding the sin of Adam (peace be on him), sacrificial offerings of some of his sons were accepted; as for instance, the offering of Abel was. He became the favoured one of God, the Almighty, it is said. It is clear that acceptance of him by God would not mean that God made him His favoured one and took his offering as a living sacrifice which spirals a man's excellence to greater heights. For, acceptance of the offering has no meaning other than this that his reward from God had become a continued reality. Abel and Cain were both sons of Adam (peace be on him) and born after the incident of his sin. Both should have inherited the father's sin. But in spite of the fact that both were born with sin, when they made the offering, it was accepted of one as against that of the other which was not. Had they inherited sin, they would

not make the offering and if they did, it should have been rejected of both.

(2) The above reference carries the following words:

> "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?"

It means that "if thou cared to become righteous, would not the Father make thee His favoured one?" The clear corollary of the above statement is that "if thou carest to become righteous thou canst and the gate to virtue is ever open to thee if thou wouldst but wish to enter it." And similarly the words would mean: " The opportunity to become a favourite of Lord God and His elect is there only if thou wouldst avail of it."

This is indeed much further than where salvation takes. It is evident that men were accepted by God, the Almighty till that period through their deeds and not through atonement and man could win Divine approbation through repentance after he had sinned. The two conclusions point out that every individual can become righteous and every man can become a favourite of God the Great. If it were not so, there would be no point in addressing Cain in the words: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted. And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."

(3) It is further said, "And if thou doest not, sin lieth at

the door." Christianity says that the seed of sin was sown in the heart of man after Adam committed sin. This in fact, makes sin hereditary. But the Bible avers that sin did not enter the heart of man but that it "lieth at the door" of his house. It means it does not inhere in the heart of man but invades it from outside. The Bible thus does not hold that the seed of sin was sown in the heart of man after Adam sinned, but that it "lieth" at the door of every man. In other words, sin is an external thing and not a hereditary element forming part of the constitution of man.

(4) It is again said: "and thou shalt rule over him." It is addressed to Cain. When God bids him to do a certain thing, it is evident that it is a practical possibility. We do not ask a small child in an affectionate manner, unless we are joking frivolously, to go and carry back the car or to take hold of an elephant. We would ask him to do only what is within his capacity. If an officer were to order a peon in his office to bring him the railway engine bound for Jacobabad, one may well anticipate his reaction. The first thing he would do is to make off on some pretext and with his face drained of all colour he would tell others that the boss had gone out of his mind for his having required of him to do something beyond human capacity. [If sin could not be conquered, why did then God tell Cain that he could overcome it?]

There is no doubt about it that God rejected his offering, saying that since he had not offered the sacrifice in the spirit of sincerity and in good faith which alone made it deserving of acceptance, He, therefore, would not accept it of him. At the same time, He told him that the offering once rejected by Him was not rejected for good and that it was still open to him to overcome sin and attain His favour. Clearly, man could conquer sin through personal effort and application.

Leaving alone the sin of Adam, Allah the Supreme went as far as to say with regard to Cain's sin, that it was not something that could not be overcome and that if he cared to strive, he could conquer sin and exhorted him to overcome it.

CHRISTIANS FOLLOW CAIN

The above-quoted reference further shows that Christians follow Cain while the Muslims follow Abel. For, Christians believe in forgiveness through atonement and are hostile to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) and to Muslims because their own offering was not accepted like that of Cain. They are, therefore, bent on avenging it on Muhammad the Prophet of Allah (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) and his followers. In the Christian world of today we find the words of God the

Almighty addressed to Cain: "And if thou doest not well, sinn lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire" coming true. There is no end to sin in which the Christian world abounds.

To come to the point, according to the Bible, man could become righteous even after the sin of Adam and that the seed of sin had not been sown in his heart; on the contrary, even in that age it invaded from outside and in the event of his sinning, the door to repentance stood ajar and he had the chance to conquer sin; in fact, he could go one further— he could become the favourite of God, the Supreme. The contingency, which, the Christians say, calls for atonement, does not arise according to the Bible.

Yet another question arises about the theory of vicarious atonement. Suppose there was no virtue left in the world and vicarious atonement became imperative, would there be the need of the Son of God for such atonement? The other question that arises is: Was Messiah the Son of God?

WAS VICARIOUS ATONEMENT IMPERATIVE?

In order to examine the question—Was atonement imperative?—we should turn to the book of the Messiah.

The Bible agrees that prophets of God have been showing various miracles. According to it the Prophets used to quicken the dead, cure the sick, increase the scanty meals and show miracles of different types. But the Christians say (I have used the word Christians purposely for they say many things on their own which find no confirmation in the New Testament, even in its existing distorted version) that forgiveness of sins is beyond human power and that prophets no doubt quickened the dead as is said of Elijah and Isaiah (Kings 1, 17:22 and Kings II, 4:35) but that forgiving of sin was not in the range of possibility. Now let us see whether the New Testament supports this view.

The New Testament relates that a cripple was once brought on his bed to the Messiah. The Messiah gave him a look and said,

> "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." (Matthew 9:2)

This amazed the people and they wondered that he forgave sins. Christianity says the same thing in this age. How can man forgive sin, it asks. But the New Testament says:

> "And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, wherefore think you evil in your hearts.

> For whether is easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say 'Arise, and walk'?" (Matthew 9:4-5)

which of the two things is easier, he enquires, for the cripple to get up or to tell the sinful that he is forgiven? In the light of Christian teaching, it would be far easier to tell the cripple to be up and about than to tell the sinner that he has been forgiven. But the New Testament ascribes the following statement to the Messiah (peace be on him).

> "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then says he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." (Matthew 9:1-8)

First, the people registered surprise at the Messiah's declaration forgiving sins: they wondered how the son of Adam could forgive sin. The Messiah said: "But that ye may know that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then says he to the sick of the palsy) Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house."

They were then surprised still more and "they marvelled and glorified God, which had given such power unto men."

The above incident which is narrated in the New

Testament proves that forgiveness of sin and ordering a cripple to be up and hie home are human and not divine miracles. A similar incident (Matthew 8:1-11), pertains to an adulteress. It is said that the Messiah (peace be on him) forgave her sins, though she had not believed in him nor in his Redemption.

WAS MESSIAH SON OF GOD?

Now as to the other point whether sin could be forgiven only through the Son of God, the question arises whether Messiah (peace be on him) was really the Son of God. The answer is that there is no other argument in favour of this assertion but that the Messiah (peace be on him) himself made that claim. But the point is whether the Messiah (peace be on him) had in him divine attributes. For instance, when we say that God exists, we put forth arguments in support of the fact of His existence and cite as evidence the attributes and powers that do not inhere in men. But Christians offer no such evidence which would distinguish the Messiah (peace be on him) from the other prophets. In fact, the Bible ascribes many things to the Prophets which are not to be found in the Messiah (peace be on him). But this is a different subject. The relevant point here is that the entire foundation of Christianity rests on the assertion that the Messiah (peace be on him) claimed to be the Son of God and

since he said so, he was in fact the Son of God. We agree that he did say so, but the question is whether Son of God is an idiomatic expression or is used in the ordinary sense, in common usage, as, for instance, one says: Omar son of Zaid or Omar son of Khalid; or does it carry some other significance?

So far, as the claim to be the Son of God is concerned, a study of the New Testament shows the following words of Messiah (peace be on him):

> "Even so, Father; for so, it seemed good in thy sight."
>
> "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever, the Son will reveal him." (Matthew 11:26-27)

Here the Messiah (peace be on him) calls himself "Son of God." So far as, the words are concerned we agree that Messiah has been said to the "Son of God" in the New Testament. But the question is whether the expression is synonymous with the physical sense expressive of this relationship or it carries some other meaning.

Similarly, it is said:

> "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."
> (John 3:17)

Here again, Messiah calls himself the Son of God the Supreme. At the same time he has said something which is inconsistent with another statement ascribed to him by the New Testament. Here he says: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." On another occasion, however, he says (Luke, 20: 9-16) in the course of a parable— the parable of the garden: "Then began he to speak to the people this parable; a certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard; but the husbandmen beat him and sent him away empty. And again, he sent another servant; and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. And again, he sent a third; and they wounded him also, and cast him out. Then said the lord of the vineyard, "What shall I do?" I will send my beloved son, it may be they will reverence him when they see him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, this is the heir; come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be

ours. So, they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What I therefore, shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others."

This parable shows that the coming of the son is for punishment because of their intransigence in the matter of payment of the revenues of the garden. God, therefore, sent His son so that he brings home the charge against them to punish them. This parable thus runs counter to the Messiah's statement: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

Again, it is said that the Messiah (peace be on him) told his disciples:

> "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
> (Matthew, 28: 19)

WAS JESUS SON OF MAN?

On several other occasions, besides those pointed out above, the Messiah (peace be on him) claimed to be the Son of God, the Great. But we should not lose sight of the fact that whereas the Messiah (peace be on him) claimed for himself the status of the Son of God, even

His only begotten, he has, at the same time, on many occasions, called himself son of man. We have, therefore, no justification for preferring one of his claims to the other. It is the Messiah himself who says he is the Son of God. It is again he himself who says he is the Son of man. When both the claims are made by one individual, there is no justification for us in preferring one of his claims to the other. We will have to disprove by cogent argument that his claim that he is the son of God is erroneous or that his other claim namely that he is the son of man is untenable. In short, when one and the same person makes a dual claim, we cannot, purely on the basis of our own reasoning, accede one claim and reject the other. The New Testament says:

> "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."
> (Matthew, 20: 28)

It is noteworthy in this connection that the Promised Messiah who was the like of the Messiah (peace be on them) has similarly said "Place not for us the chair. For, we are appointed to serve." Since people generally make the poor serve, and subject them to various pressures, therefore, the Messiah said: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." So far as, its moral quality is concerned, the teaching that man should not tyrannize and should instead devote his life

to the service of others, is of a really high order; but so far as, the question of the status of Jesus is concerned, the reference makes it clear that he was Son of man.

It is further said:

> "But as the days of Noah were, so, shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matthew 24:38)

Again it is said:

> "For in such an hour as you think not the Son of man cometh."(Matthew 24:44)

It indicates that the first advent of the Messiah was as the "Son of man" and so shall be his second coming as well. But that it will be so sudden that it will be a surprise to all. In other words, he will be accorded the same treatment as is accorded to the Prophets of God whose appearance is treated as uncalled for and generally people repudiate their claim.

It is yet again said:

> "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you."(John 7:27)

People strive for bread and raiment but you should not

be after these things and should instead labour for the food that gives real life and is to be found with the son of Adam, for, the rest is perishable and of passing benefit.

It is strange indeed that notwithstanding such teaching, it is the followers of Christ who are wholly bent upon procurement of worldly goods and have turned their backs, more than any other people, on the requirements of spiritual life.

It is further said:

> "But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"
> (Luke 22:48)

Judas was a disciple of the Messiah. He sold the Master for thirty piasters to his enemies. The Messiah (peace be on him) was in hiding at the time. He and the disciples wore a uniform kind of dress and kept their faces covered so that the enemies might not discover Jesus (John 21:34). The enemy was also after him and wanted very much to know which of them was the Messiah (peace be on him). Finally, they bought over Judas, a disciple of the Messiah. On payment to him of thirty piasters, he asked them to accompany him to where all of them were gathered and proposed that he would go up and kiss one of them and they would thus know the Master and could take hold of him. Allah the Supreme had at the same time warned

the Messiah through revelation how a particular disciple of his would betray him. Accordingly, when Judas went there with the soldiers of the enemy and stepped forward to kiss the Master, the Messiah said:

> "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:28)

Clearly it means that when Messiah came first, he was the Son of man, and he will again be the Son of man when he comes next, and he was Son of man, as he himself says, when he was put on the cross.

REAL MEANING OF THE TERM

When, therefore, the Messiah (peace be on him) himself claims to be the son of man, there can be no justification for interpreting the term 'Son of God' in a sense which is neither sustained by the Old Testament nor by the New Testament. Under the circumstances, we must either say that the Messiah (peace be on him) was a demented person claiming to be Son of God at times and calling himself Son of man at others; or we should find some other solution to it and accept one as a metaphor and the other as a factual statement. If we can discover which of the two is an idiomatic expression and which a factual description, we can reach a correct conclusion without difficulty. If the expression 'Son of man' is an idiomatic

one, then we must accept the other version as factual description. But if the appellation 'Son of God' is an idiomatic expression, then we have the added advantage of discovering the truth that the entire basis of atonement resting on the sacrifice of the Son of God turns out to be wholly unfounded. When we study the New Testament in this light, we come across the following words of the Messiah (peace be on him):

> "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."
> (Matthew 5:9)

Here the Messiah calls other men also Sons of God, besides himself. It shows that by being named as Son of God one does not become God. If by the mere fact of one being called a son, it follows that one must also accede to him the status of godhead, then as the above reference makes out, all those who make peace can lay claim to divinity and become entitled to be eligible for offering atonement. This reference however, does not only illuminate the point that there are many others besides the Messiah (peace be on him) who are sons of God the Great and the exclusive entitlement of the Messiah (peace be on him) to atone for others is nullified; yet another aspect presents itself into view. The Messiah says in the course of the above reference, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of

God."

Here people have not been barely termed as sons of God. But a good reason has been offered to substantiate the assertion, if a bare statement to that effect had been made, the ground for it would not have been known. Search for a ground would only have ended in futile controversy: one would have suggested one ground while another would have come forward with a different one. But the Messiah (peace be on him) has also given the reason why it should be understood that they were sons of God. He says that because they make peace: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

This means that making peace is a qualification for entitlement to the honorific 'the Son of God'. This reference not only shows that there are many others besides the Messiah who are sons of God but at the same time, it reveals that the Messiah (peace be on him) is himself not a Son of God. And if he has been so called, it must be on account of something of a minor importance; he lacked the requisite qualification. For, the Messiah (peace be on him) himself says:

> "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10:34)

While one reference from Matthew shows that a man becomes qualified for the title of Son of God by making peace, the other reference from the same source points out that the Messiah (peace be on him) lacked this qualification and therefore, lacked title to the honorific.

Similarly, another reference says that other men have been termed God and sons of God. The Messiah himself avers that calling himself son of God does not make him God or Son of God in fact: "The works I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me" (i.e., to know my truthfulness you require no external evidence. The deeds of which God the Great made me His instrument, are eloquent evidence in themselves of my truthfulness and righteousness). "But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you (i.e., since you are not of my following you have set yourselves in opposition to me), "my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (i.e., those who are of my following hear my voice and obey me). "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. I and my Father are one."

When the Messiah (peace be on him) said this to the Jews and since his last sentence was: "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand," and since he added "I

and my Father are one," and as the term Father stood for God, it meant that he and God were one, the Jews concluded that he was claiming to be God. It is said that upon this "the Jews took up stones again to stone him" (i.e, the Messiah said to them that he was exhorting people to do good, and he asked if it was on that ground that they wanted to stone him; that he taught humility and forgiveness and he asked them if it was on that account that they would stone him; further, that he taught people love of God and His fear and asked them if it was for that they wanted to stone him, and that he served mankind and exhorted others to serve fellowmen and asked if that was why they wanted to stone him and again that he had done many of the deeds, God the Great had charged him to do and asked them to point out the offence which caused them to stone him).

"For good work we stone thee not but for blasphemy;" (i.e, they did not want to stone him because of the spirit of public service and kindly treatment of the poor or because of his teachings of humility and forgiveness and mercy but because of this unorthodox utterance) "and because that thou being a man, maketh thyself God," (i.e, being a mere mortal he claimed to be God—it was therefore that they would stone him).

"Jesus answered them, 'Is it not written in your law', 'I said; ye are gods," (i.e, does not the Bible say that God

told His servants that they were gods). "If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God."

The Messiah (peace be on him) said that they had neither become Gods nor heretics when God said in the Bible that they were Gods; and yet only the word son had been used regarding him and they called him a heretic. When the appellation God had been used in respect of people before him and they did not become heretics thereby but, on the contrary, it was interpreted as having been used as a metaphor, why then in his case the title of son had become such a heinous offence as to make him a heretic in their eyes.

Here the Messiah (peace be on him) clearly admits that the word son used in the Bible about him does not carry a literal sense, for, the expression 'God' had been used in respect of many other people in the same book and they had not become Gods in the eyes of Jews nor even heretics; and since in spite of this appellation, they did not accept them as Gods nor did they declare them as heretics, why did they then ascribe to him a claim to be God on his using the same expression in his favour and called him heretic and fit for being stoned, he asked.

"If I do not the works of my father, believe me not,"

(i.e., there was no gain in twisting words and in making mischief. The question is—whether the works I do manifest the glory and uniqueness of God the Supreme, or defeat that end; whether they are the deeds of those who have faith in His incomparable oneness, or of heretics. If my deeds approximate those of the believers in one God, then the term son used by God the Supreme in His word in respect of me, must be interpreted in some other sense, and to reach a conclusion in this behalf it would be necessary to examine my works).

> "But if I do though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me and I in him." (John 10:25-39)

The above reference clearly establishes that the Messiah himself gave another meaning to the term 'Son of God' and said that his claim to be one did not mean that he had literally acquired divinity in his person or that he had become God in fact, but that, on the contrary, as it is said in the Bible about others that they were gods but were in fact, not gods. And it was merely metaphorical way of saying; similarly, when he claimed to be the Son of God, it was in an metaphorical sense and not in the sense that he had literally become Divine.

The above quotation carries a reference to the Judaic Law which we find in the Psalms, "God standeth in the

congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. How long will ye judge unjustly and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. Defend the poor and fatherless: do Justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked. They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of earth are out of course. I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations" (i.e., the faithful are gods and He judges among these gods). (Psalm, 82)

The Messiah (peace be on him) points to these very word of David (peace be on him), One of the verses is: "He judgeth among the gods." The other verses (6 & 7) are quite clear: "I have said, ye are gods, and all of you are children of the most High, But ye shall die like men and fall like one of the princes."

ALL ISRAEL TERMED GODS

Here David (peace be on him) says in effect: "O Israel all of ye are gods. You are all of you Divine and sons of the True Lord." At the same time, he pointed out that though he had called them gods and sons of God, they should not be led to believe that they were literally gods or sons of God but that they would die like all men. In other words,

God was ever-living and not subject to death but that they could not escape it; that they had been called gods and sons of God, because they would establish justice in the world like Him and enforce His laws among the people and since thereby, they would be manifesting God, they were therefore, allegorically called gods and sons of God. Some people who hold that, the inner thoughts of the Prophets are the inspired word of God call this book David's Book. But we regard it, according to the teachings of the Holy Quran, revelation of god the Supreme and we are of the view that David (peace be on him) was told by God the Great that Israelites were Gods or sons of God and that notwithstanding being gods and sons of God, they would be subject to death, that they will eat and clothe themselves; and that they had been called God and His sons because they would establish equity in the world and enforce the ordinances of God the Great among mankind. Accordingly, David (peace be on him) pointed out to them that since God had applied to them His name and called them His sons, they should take stock of their deeds, do justice to the poor, lift the depressed, show mercy to the oppressed, forgive and overlook faults and cultivate in themselves divine attributes.

The above references show that when the Messiah (peace be on him) called himself 'Son of God', he did not mean to say that be believed it to he in the literal sense. For, on

his own statements, he took himself to be the Son of God in the sense in which David (peace be on him) had called Israelites gods and sons of God. Similarly, the Bible has used the expressions, God, and sons of God, in respect of different people on several occasions. The Messiah (peace be on him) was, therefore, the Son of God in the same sense as the word, God, and sons of God, carried in the case of these people.

The Christians generally mislead people into believing that the words, God and son of God, have been used in respect of the Messiah in a different sense. But the reference from John clearly stresses the point that he was not to call himself "Son of God" in the same sense as others had been described God or sons of God. If the term carried any other sense, the explanation offered by the Messiah (peace be on him) becomes nullified. The Messiah says that he did call himself Son of God but that did not make him a claimant to godhead for the simple reason that others before had been termed gods and sons of God. If it is said that the Messiah's claim was in a different sense, his whole argument fails. The Jews could have put it to him that the people of yore had been called sons of God in a sense different from the sense his claim implied. But the quotation of the above reference by the Messiah (peace be on him) shows clearly that he agreed that he claimed to be the Son of God in the sense in which the men of preceding generations had been described.

And when the Messiah (peace be on him) is Son of God in the same sense as others before him were called sons of God, the Prophets of Israel and their devoted followers were as much entitled to offer atonement as was the Messiah (peace be on him). And if they were not entitled, neither was the Messiah (peace be on him); for the foundation of atonement rests on the Messiah's sonship of God. As I have already shown, Messiah is not the sole claimant to that honorific; hundreds of the Prophets of Israel and lacs of their faithful followers share the honour, according to the Bible.

So far we have brought to bear proof in the light of the Bible against the thesis that since the Messiah claimed to be the 'Son of God', he therefore, offered atonement. He no doubt claimed to be the Son of God but in no sense other than that in which people before him were called sons of God and that at the same time, he claimed to be son of man.

"SON OF GOD" A METAPHORIC EPRESSION

Now we shall examine whether the real facts back Messiah's sonship of God or his sonship of man, and in order to determine the truth, we shall again turn to his own words.

I have already explained that the Messiah admits that he is the Son of God in the same sense as were the Israelites His sons. And when his own word confirms this fact, it is clear that if he had an entitlement to atonement, they all had equal claim to it, and if they were not eligible for this honour, neither was Jesus (peace be on him). Now we shall examine this point in yet another light. When a person claims in this world that he is the Son of God, it can be either a statement of literal fact or a metaphoric expression. Since it is subject to both the interpretations, a way must therefore, be sought to resolve the issue. Let us take another instance. We are often apt to call a particular person a lion or an eagle, and yet we also call a lion, a lion. We take our child round the zoo and pointing to an animal in the cage, we tell him that it is a lion and if, at the same time, there is a brave person in front of us, we call him a lion too. Now the question is, how would the child distinguish between the two and be enabled to place the one lion in one category and the other in another category. There must be some yardstick to distinguish one from the other. In this particular case, the yardstick is the knowledge that the child has gained through a study of natural history books which tell that a lion has paws of a particular description, a tale and a head of a particular shape and its figure is of a given form. When, therefore, we show to a boy a lion, caged in the zoo, he at once knows that it answers the description

given in books of natural history; and when we call a man a lion and the child finds that he has neither a tale, nor paws and that he looks like other men, the child at once knows that it was only a metaphoric way of our calling him a lion. Similarly, when we call a person son of God metaphorically, we never mean to say that he is God or son of God in the physical sense. But how would the audience know that our naming him as Son of God was in the metaphoric and not in the literal sense. Therefore, there should be some yardstick to determine the sense of the expression so that there is no misunderstanding. For instance, Allah the Supreme says in the Holy Quran about the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace of Allah be on him and His blesssings):

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُبَايِعُوْنَكَ اِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُوْنَ اللّٰهَ ؕ يَدُ اللّٰهِ فَوْقَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ

i.e., O Muhammad! those who subscribe allegiance to thee, they subscribe allegiance to Allah; it is the hand of Allah that is on their hands (Al-Fath, 48:11). The physical fact was there that it was the hand of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) that was on their hands and not the hand of Allah. In spite of this verse, we do not believe that the Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) was God in person. Why do we not so believe? The answer is that in many other places in the Holy Quran, the distinctive attributes ascribed to God,

the Supreme are not to be found in the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him). For instance, God neither eats nor drinks but the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) used to eat and drink. Allah the Supreme says in the Holy Quran that He is neither subject to sleep nor does He doze but the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) was subject to both these states. Allah the Excellent says in the Holy Quran that He needs no spouse but the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) had nine wives. In other words, the distinctive features that were found in the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) are absent in God, the Supreme and the distinctive attributes that inhere in God, the Great were not found in the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him). Therefore, when God said the above words, we at once knew that He used the expression in a metaphoric sense and it did not mean that he (the Prophet) had become God. Accordingly, we and all the Muslims of the world hold the belief that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) was a mortal- except perhaps some ignorant individuals who do not share this view. Sometime back, a friend paid me a visit. He was illiterate but he recited verses of the Holy Quran very clearly. I enquired of him the reason for this. He told me

that the friend through whom he was enabled to join the Ahmadiyya Movement; used to read the Holy Quran very clearly and it was through association with him that his pronunciation became so clear. He then related to me that he once happened to visit some of his relations. He invited their attention to the statement of the Holy Prophet (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him):

إِنَّمَآ أَنَا۠ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ

i.e., I am a man like you (Al-Kahf, 18:111). There upon they warned him saying "Listen thou carefully, you are our relation. It does not seem nice to us to give you a beating. Better pack off quietly from here; for, we never heard it said before that Muhammad the blessed Prophet of Allah was a human being, but you have said it today!"

There are some ignorant persons of this type among the Muslims, but the intelligent element among them has ever held the view that, notwithstanding that Muhammad the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be on him) is the chief of mankind, chief of all the Prophets and the beloved of Allah, he is a human being. Therefore, when the Messiah says that he is the Son of God, we must see whether he lays claim to the distinctive attributes of the Divine.

So far as partaking of food and drink are concerned, Christians say that since the Messiah came in the human

form, he used to eat and drink. We need not go into an argument over this, but at the least, spiritual properties must inhere in God. It cannot come to pass that He would lose the excellences which He should possess as God, when coming into this world. It is said in St. Mark:

> "And when he was gone forth into the way there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, why callest thou me good there is none good but one, that is God."(10:17-18)

The first attribute of God is His goodness, for, a defective being cannot be God. But the Messiah denies having the primary attribute of God and says, "why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God."

RECENT ALTERATIONS IN BIBLE

I would like to alert friends here that Christians have made quite a few changes in the New Testament following criticism by the Promised Messiah (peace be on him). As an instance in point, this very incident now finds mention in St. Matthew in the following words: "Why dost thou ask me about goodness, for, only one is good." While in all the editions published

in England and in the Urdu versions published before 1910, the Messiah (peace be on him) is reported to have said "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God." The Promised Messiah (peace and the blessings be on him) had raised the point that it was claimed that the Messiah (peace be on him) was the Son of God and, therefore, offered atonement, but the above quotation disproved the claim, for, he denied that he was good and since he was not Divine, he could not offer atonement. In other words, the doctrine of atonement was repudiated, and on the contrary the doctrine of the Unity of God was confirmed. Christians, seeing no other way out, substituted the text with the following words in the subsequent Urdu editions of the New Testament: "Why thou dost ask me about goodness? there is only one good." In other words, it is purported to show that the Messiah (peace be on him) objected to his asking him about goodness, since God alone was good. But all the English, Greek and German language editions of the New Testament as also the old Urdu editions carry the words: "Why callest thou me good, there is none good but one, that is God." There are some seventeen to eighteen similar changes Christians have made under the pressure of the criticism by the Promised Messiah (peace and the blessings be on him). The truth of the matter, however, is that the questioner asked "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" and Jesus (peace be on

him) answered back "Why callest thou me good: there is none good but one that is God."

JESUS LACKED FORE-KNOWLEDGE

Two points emerge from this quotation: Firstly, God has goodness, for, without goodness, He cannot be God. Secondly, Jesus lacks goodness and the two premises lead to the conclusion that since Jesus lacks goodness, he is not God.

Similarly, it is mentioned in the New Testament:

> "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise, ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the door (i.e., the second advent of the Messiah); verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that Day (of the second coming of Messiah) and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, nor the son, but the father only."(Matthew 24:32-37)

The above quotation is clear on the point that Messiah

(peace be on him) denies fore-knowledge of the future while such knowledge is an attribute of God the Great. When therefore Messiah says he has no knowledge of the hidden and no knowledge of the future events, he admits in other words that his use of the expression Son of God in respect of himself is not in its literal sense, but in a metaphoric sense; that is to say that all that he means thereby is that he is a favourite of God.

The New Testament has also laid great stress on the expression "One God." It is said in St. John:

> "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (5: 44)

Christianity stands for Trinity but Jesus clearly uses the expression "the Only God" and says that those who honour one another but seek it not of the One God, they can never believe.

> "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."(John 17:3)

One more point has been clarified here. The Christians could argue out the quotation from St. John (5:44) with a specious answer that in their vocabulary the One God stands for tripartite godhead which comprises God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost; and they

claim that "three are one and one is three." They could very well say that God stands for a composite of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. The above-quoted reference from St. John has repudiated this stand, for, the Messiah is mentioned in it as distinct from the Only True God. The words are: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the, only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Here the "only true God" is an expression used distinct from Messiah; he is not included in it. It is evident, therefore, that "the only true God" is distinct from Messiah and not in conjunction with him. Tauhid, i.e., Unity of God, means in truth His exclusiveness that none be associated with Him, neither the Son, nor the Holy Ghost, nor aught else.

In short, this quotation makes it clear that the word 'Son' is a metaphoric expression used by the Messiah; it did not carry the sense that he was a partner with God. It was, on the contrary, an expression the like of which people are wont to use in respect of their sons, as, for instance, they would call them the apples of their eyes. As men have a right to use terms of endearment, so has God the right to use terms of endearment, in respect of His servants. It happens very often that one is tempted to call a friend's child son. It never happens that later on he files claim of inheritance citing witnesses that he had been accepted as son in their presence. It is recognized on all

hands that such terms are expressive of affection. In the same way, a mother uses similar terms in respect of her child, as, for instance, she would call him the apple of her eyes. Now it never happens that a live child is required to be buried with the mother, should she happen to die, because he was no more a child but that he was the apple of the deceased's eyes. None is known to have done such a stupid thing in the world. It is common knowledge that all such epithets are expressions of endearment and affection. Like words are sometime employed by God the Almighty in respect of His favoured servants; He sometimes calls them His children as he called the Messiah (peace be on him), or, for that matter, he used the term in respect of several other prophets. The naming of a particular person as son would not therefore mean that the Only God had henceforth ceased to be or that henceforward there shall be two or three gods.

Briefly speaking, the above quotation indicates that according to the Messiah (peace be on him), God is a different person, other than the Messiah. That is why the Only God has been spoken of as distinct from the Messiah. If the latter were God, he need not have been mentioned separately. The only God would have included God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. But he has been mentioned apart from the Only God; it means, therefore, that he is not a part of the person of the Only God. These quotations thus establish that the

term "Son of God" was not used in the literal sense, in respect of the Messiah but that it was employed only as metaphoric expression.

MESSIAH'S PHYSICAL BODY

The Christians also believe that the Messiah has no body as God has no form and that when he came into the world, he took a physical form for the sake of mankind; that in reality the son has no form as the Father has none, even as the Holy Ghost has none. When he came into the world to offer himself up on the Cross for the sons of men he took a bodily form. In other words, taking of a physical body was for the sole purpose of hanging by the Cross to atone for the sins of mankind, so that he may suffer death once, as death is the crop of sin, and that since he took up the sins of others, death had become inevitable. But when death had come upon him, the scheme adopted to save mankind had found its implementation. If, therefore, the Christian claim is a sound one, it was necessary that the Messiah should have no physical body when he rose again, for, the purpose of God had been fulfilled, the sins of mankind had been remitted, and now the son stood no more in need of a body as he had become perfect like God the Father. But it appears from the New Testament that even after the incident of the Cross, when, according to them the Messiah rose from the dead, he had his

physical body and ascended the heaven or, according to other versions, disappeared from the summit of the mountain with the same body. In other words, as the New Testament would have us believe, the Messiah not only rose from the sepulchre with his physical body but that he ascended into heavens with the same while his physical form had no significance any more. So long as he had not come into the world, he had no body. He assumed a physical form as a temporary measure for the sole purpose of taking upon himself the sins of mankind. Once the object was served there was logically no need to support the body any further. But the New Testament holds that he rose from the dead with his physical body and went to heaven with it. Thus the entire edifice of his divinity topples to the ground, and the fact emerges that the Messiah whom the Christians believe to be the equal of God the Father, is still imprisoned in his physical human form in the heavens. Again, the New Testament does not say when he will part with this body; in fact it says that he will be coming with it when he makes his second advent; as it is mentioned that when he will come next "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory." (Mark 13: 26), (i.e., his claim will not be readily accepted; that there will arise many doubts and misgivings).

The New Testament thus clearly says that people will see the Messiah the second time also in the same body.

It is evident that he cannot suffer death a second time, for death came upon him the first time for purposes of atonement. Once atonement has been offered, there is no room any more for death which means that either Christians must concede the position that Jesus will eternally remain imprisoned in his physical body, without the hope of release from it, or, that they should agree that the theory about the assumption by him of physical body was ill-founded; for, if it were a tenable proposition, he should have been free of the bodily encumbrance after the incident of the Cross. On the contrary, instead of being free of it, according to the New Testament, he rose again with the same body and ascended into the heavens with it.

DID MESSIAH OFFER ATONEMENT WILLINGLY?

Apropos the Christian claim that the Messiah offered atonement, it is necessary to ascertain whether the Messiah (peace be on him) was a willing party to the act. The whole crux of the matter is that God would not remit the sins of men, and since He could not, He accepted the atonement of their sins through inflicting punishment on Jesus. Their argument is that if Zaid is in debt and Bakr comes forward to meet the former's liability, the debit account of Zaid is written off; that men have become

indebted to God the Almighty through their sins; and because He is just, He cannot forgive, for, according to their view, justice demands that the sinner should incur punishment; He, therefore, remedied the situation by realizing the outstandings from His son! Suppose it was a correct stand, though a money debt is in no manner comparable to sin—on the contrary, the case in point is really akin to the instance of a victim of cancer; if in respect of him ten thousand persons would assert that it is they and not he who suffered from cancer and that they would readily bear his trouble, they could not. There are many other similar predicaments so frequently occurring in the world which are not susceptible of vicarious recompense, and sin is certainly one of these. But let us for the sake of argument accept the Christian viewpoint that sin is susceptible of vicarious atonement. The question that would still remain to be answered is whether it is lawful to take away forcibly the money of A to square up the account of B? It is quite evident that it would be permissible for A to pay off the debts of B, if he so wished of his own free will. But if we refuse to write off the debt B owes us and force the sum out of A's pocket to square the account, not only do we fail in doing justice, but we commit a grave wrong. Failure of justice arose out of our not realizing the arrears from the debtor; an act of grievous wrong was done when the amount was forcibly realized from an unconcerned person. Therefore, if the

Messiah (peace be on him) was agreeable to redeem the debt of men and the other premises are also proven, we have no choice left but to concede that his atonement stands validated.

But even if Christianity proves the other premises which we have exploded in the foregoing dissertation and fails to establish that the Messiah (peace be on him) took upon himself the sins of mankind of his free will, the whole fabric of the atonement theory comes down with a crash, for the simple reason that the major actor in the atonement drama was an unwilling scapegoat.

EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

We now turn to the New Testament to find out what it has to say in this behalf. It is mentioned in St. Mark (14:32-42):

> "And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John,[1] and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death:

[1] The Messiah took only three disiples with him and proceeded to pray in seclusion.

tarry ye here, and watch.[1] And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.[2] And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me[3]: nevertheless not what

I will, but what thou wilt.[4] And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto

[1] First, leaving all his disciples behind, he took along only three of them to accompany him and later, fearing that their presence would stifle the free expression of wailing and moaning, he told them to stay behind and keep awake.

[2] He prayed that this hour should pass from him and the enemy should not put him to the Cross—the means whereby he was to carry the sins of all mankind.

[3] These words clearly show that he was being forced to hang on the Cross against his free will and was not agreeable to the assignment;

[4] i.e., personally I have no inclination to be hanged and to offer atonement, but thou hast willed it so and I am being dragged to it against my will.

It sounds like the case of a Banker realizing forcibly arrears outstanding against A from B—an unconcerned party and then writing off the debtor's debit account. Messiah says in unambiguous language: "Nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt." In other words, he meant to say that he had no wish at

> Peter, Simon, sleepest thou?[1] couldest not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.[2] And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.[3] And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him.[4] And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest; it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand."

This quotation shows that the Messiah (peace be on him) all to hang on the Cross but he was prepared if God had so willed.

[1] The real name of Peter was Simons. The Messiah named him Peter which means 'rock'—meaning that he would one day serve as a rock for Christianity.

[2] Since it was the will of God that he should hang, his heart was strong enough for the ordeal but that his body, because of human weakness, was unprepared.

[3] That is, he repeated the same words—"Nevertheless, not what I will but what thou wilt."

[4] He would come back again and again in that state of sorrow and agitation to see if the disciples shared his grief and stood by him in his misfortune but he would every time find them asleep.

did not offer atonement of his own free will which, in fact, was all for the cup to pass from him and had voted against crucifixion. Whatever, therefore, took place was through coercion.

In this respect the second testimony is offered by St. Luke. It is said: "And he came out, and went, as was his wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place he said unto them, pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed. Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." (In other words, the New Testament agrees that the Messiah said that it was not his wish but that if the Lord had willed it so, he was agreeable to be hanged; so to speak, he said he was not willing to pay up the debt of others but if God had so willed, he could very well have His way.)

"And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (i.e., an angel strengthened and heartened God. It is like a rat or something meaner still heartening an horse.)

"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly." (In other words, even the ministration of the angel failed and the Messiah devoted himself to prayer so that death on the Cross be averted from him).

"And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Though it was severe cold at the time, it being the month of December, the Messiah lived in the northern part and was at a mountain at the time. His agony was so great that while praying in such severely cold season, his sweat started falling in drops. After this prayer he came over to his disciples. Since it is hard for a person to reveal his own shortcomings, lest the enemy should taunt him, here St. Luke puts a strange construction, though St. Marks makes no bones about it that the Messiah (peace be on him) time and again returned to the disciples exhorting them to wake up and pray but that they would not stir; St. Luke, however, seems to have felt that people would at once point out that the Messiah had a strange set of disciples who would not budge an inch, in spite of repeated reminders by the Messiah to be up and praying. In order, therefore, to counteract that impression, St. Luke says:

"And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples he found them sleeping for sorrow;" (i.e., they were so much overwhelmed with grief that they went to sleep). "And said unto them, why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

(According to St. Luke, it would mean that they were so much grief-stricken that they had fallen asleep on account of it. In other words, one in the grip of overwhelming grief

is prone to slumber and when he has no sorrow he prays. It clearly shows that St. Luke wanted to counteract the reader's impression that the Messiah's disciples were not very much concerned about the Master even in his hour of misfortune and remained fast asleep. Therefore, he inserted the words, "he found them sleeping for sorrow" and the Messiah said unto them: "Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (St. Luke 22: 45-46).

FORCED ATONEMENT INVALID

This quotation also bears out that the Messiah (peace be on him) was not willing to suffer death on the Cross. The entire basis of the doctrine of Atonement rests on the assumption that Jesus willingly suffered crucifixion to atone for the sins of mankind. But since he did not, of his own free choice hang on the Cross, there has therefore been no atonement. Christians generally advance the plea that there was no question of compulsion when Jesus himself said: "Nevertheless, not what I will but what thou wilt." We agree that it was so, as we expect no prophet to resist the will of God. When Jesus saw that God had willed that he should hang on the Cross, he submitted to the Lord God saying: "Thy will be done." But that at least proves the fact that Jesus did not offer atonement of his own free will, and there is certainly no atonement at the instance of God; it is valid only when

the person offering it does so of his own volition. The Messiah very clearly asserts that it is not his desire to offer atonement. It is quite another thing that he agreed under pressure. It sounds exactly like a man handing out his cash with a smiling countenance to burglars holding him up in a forest; he knows that one word of protest from him, and they would kill him then and there. It does not at all mean that he is giving them his money with a willing heart. The question, therefore, is not that God made him agreeable to it by force. The question is whether Jesus was agreeable to it of his own volition and free will. If Jesus had offered it of his own free choice, he will be deemed to have made the redemption and not otherwise. The above-quoted references make it evident that the Messiah (peace be on him) made it clear that he was not willing, to be crucified. Whatever, therefore, took place was due to a compelling factor and this totally nullifies the theory of redemption.

Some Christians are wont to characterize the Messiah's unwillingness as a temporary state of his mind which, they said, later underwent a change. In order to determine this point, we now turn to the mental attitude of Jesus at the time of crucifixion. There is only one Hebrew sentence preserved intact in the entire text of the New Testament, which the Messiah uttered on the occasion. It is "Eli Eli lama sabachthani" (St. Matthew 27:46). When the Messiah (peace be on him) was put on the Cross and his hands

and feet were nailed, in extreme agony, he prayed to the Lord God saying, "O my Lord! O my Lord! why hast thou forsaken me?" In other words, "For what fault didst thou abandon me and turn away from me thy merciful gaze?" This prayer also confirms the fact that the Messiah was not agreeable to be crucified of his own free will. On the contrary, he was under the impression in his last moments, that God had forsaken him, leaving him in that misfortune. In other words, the Messiah was not agreeable at heart to be crucified and when he was not agreeable to it at any time, either before the fact or after crucifixion, his crucifixion cannot, therefore, be properly termed as an act of redemption.

WAS JESUS FREE FROM HEREDITARY SIN?

Another question which comes up for examination simultaneously is whether the Messiah (peace be on him) was free from the sin of Adam to be worthy of offering atonement. The theory of vicarious atonement is based on the premises that man cannot be pure, for, he is begotten of Adam who had sinned and since the progeny inherits, the parent, the children of Adam inherited sin and have no escape from it and, therefore, they cannot attain to salvation. As no sinner can atone for another sinner, it became imperative that there should be one

who had not sinned and could of his own free choice, take up the sins of m n and offer to suffer for them, so that they could be redeemed. And this person was Jesus of Nazareth who was Son of God. He bore the sins of mankind and redeemed them by vicarious atonement through hanging on the Cross. This, in a nutshell, is the theory of vicarious atonement.

Now, if it is established that Jesus is not free from sin, the entire theory of atonement collapses; since if he was not sinless, he was not fit to offer atonement. Christians usually advance the argument that because prophets were not free from sin, they could not therefore, atone for others, neither Abram, nor Moses, nor David; they were all sinful and no sinner would atone for another sinner. But we understand from the New Testament that Jesus too was not free from sin. Naturally, therefore, when he was not sinless, he could not bear the sins of others.

MESSIAH TAINTED WITH ORIGINAL SIN

Christianity declares men sinful on the ground that their forefather Adam had sinned and since men are begotten of him, they are sinful. We say that the Messiah was also of the generation of Adam through Eve and therefore, full of sin.

The Christians argue that man inherited sin from Adam, but that Jesus had no father and, therefore, did not inherit Adam's sin. Our contention is that a heritage is transmitted from both the parents. If, for instance, the mother is syphilitic, the child is liable to carry the germs of the malady; or if, for instance, the mother is consumptive, the child may be affected by T.B. germs. Many a consumptive mother has been the source of the incidence of T.B. among her offspring. A study of conditions in the world shows that defects, whether moral, or physical or spiritual, existing in the parents, are liable to be transmitted to the children through heredity. It never happens that something may be transmitted through the father but not through the mother. Both the parents are concerned in heredity. When we examine the point from this stand, the conclusion is irresistible that Jesus, even though he had no father, did inherit Adam's sin through his mother. Jesus can be declared free from hereditary sin, if it can be established that he was neither of the generation of Adam nor of Eve. If he was without both a father and a mother, we can certainly concede that he was not tainted with hereditary sin, or, when it is proved that Eve did not sin, Jesus may be deemed to be free from hereditary sin, as, it can then be argued that he was born of Eve who was sinless and not begotten of Adam who was sinful. But the truth is that even so, Jesus has no escape from sin. For, even if it is supposed that

Eve did not sin and it was Adam alone who sinned, we could say that he did not carry the taint of sin if he were born of Eve, but Jesus was born of a lady who was born thousands of years after Eve and was linked to her through thousands of chains. During this period, thousands of times sons of Adam had touched the daughters of Eve and it was thus after thousands of cycles that Mary was born. How could she ever be immune to the taint of Adam's sin through these thousands of cycles? Had she been born directly of Eve and had Eve also been free from sin, it could without a doubt be claimed that since Eve was without sin and Mary was born of her directly, she did not carry sin. But she was not born directly of Eve, but was of the generation of those daughters of Eve who had been tainted with sin thousands of times and having thus inherited, the sin of Adam could not be the cause of Messiah's sinlessness.

WAS EVE SINLESS?

Again, it is incorrect to say that Eve was sinless. In fact, according to the Bible, she was a greater sinner than Adam, The Bible says: "Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. (It should be remembered that the serpent stands for Satan in the Bible). And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath god said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the

garden." (that is to say the Satan went to Eve and was very clever in that he did not say to her that he had learnt that God had forbidden them the fruit of a particular tree but instead he said,

> "Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden." "And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest Ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that it was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eye, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife

hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? And the man said, the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, what is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life; And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children and thy desire shall

> be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said: Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."(Genesis 3:1-19)

This is the story of Adam's sin as narrated in the Bible. It is evident from this account that the Satan aimed at beguiling Adam, for, he knew that Adam was a threat to his dominion. Eve posed no such threat. His real aim, therefore, was to oust Adam from the garden. In other words, Adam was the original inmate of the garden, Eve being born on account of him and was in the garden because of him. The real objective of Satan was to deceive Adam. But he did not approach him; instead, he approached Eve and persuaded her to eat of the fruit, and Eve subsequently made Adam partake of it. Why it so happened is a question that engages our attention at this stage. Why did Satan first approach Eve though his

real objective was to deceive Adam. The answer is that no doubt his real aim was to deceive Adam but he feared lest by making a direct approach, he should fail in his objective of imposing upon Adam; he, therefore, tackled Eve, knowing that she would be more amenable to his imposition and serve as an instrument in bringing Adam round.

PROGENY OF SINFUL PARENTS

It can be said that it is in the power of the Almighty Lord to create virtuous people from among the progeny of Eve. We agree to this view and believe that Allah has the power to create out of the generation of Eve people totally free from sin of every kind. But the theory of vicarious atonement is not based on the premise that it is in the power of God the Great to create or not to create sinless people among the progeny of Eve; it is, on the contrary, based on the assumption that man is sinful by birth and has inherited the seed of sin from Adam. So far as the question relates to the powers of Allah, we hold this belief even in respect of the generations of Adam, that there can be and there have been sinless men among them. Therefore, so far as it concerns the powers of God the Almighty, it is as much within His power to create sinless persons from among the progeny of the sinful Eve as from that of the sinning Adam. The Christians,

however, hold that the progeny of a sinful person cannot be sinless. In the face of this belief, the question of the power of the Almighty God does not arise. But if they are prepared to say, while subscribing to the view that the Almighty has the power that the progeny of Eve can be sinless, we would then claim that God the Almighty has the power similarly to create a sinless progeny from the seed of Adam. In that case, there remains no urge to lay emphasis on hereditary sin nor any occasion for sacrificing the Son of God in atonement. In other words, the entire structure of vicarious atonement crashes down instantly. Christians should come along on the level and accept that God the Almighty has the power to create pious progeny of sinful parents. But if they are prepared to concede that God has this power in respect of the progeny of Eve but are not willing to agree that He has similar power in respect of the seed of Adam, it would be an objectionable thing. The long and short of it is, whether God the Almighty has the power to create a pious generation. If He has the power to create a pious progeny of a sinning mother, He has the power similarly to create a sinless progeny of a sinful father. And if God has not the power to create a sinless progeny of a sinful father, we would have to conclude that He has no power to create a pious progeny of a sinful mother either. In short, if He can create a sinless generation of a sinning mother, He can also create a sinless generation of a sinful

father and if He cannot create a pious generation of a sinful father, neither can He create a sinless generation of a sinful mother.

The point at issue, therefore, is that if Messiah can be born of a sinful mother, other pious people can also be so born; nay, others can be more pious than the Messiah, on account of their partaking of the properties of both the parents. I have already made a mention of a *Padre* of Lahore who later became the Principal of the Saharanpur Mission College. I have stated before, a part of the talk I had with him. Now I would relate the rest of it. Probably Mr. Wood was the name of that missionary. I asked him if he could tell me what would happen if cold and hot water were mixed together. He said that it would get tempered; the hot water losing some of its heat and the cold water losing some of its coldness, there would be a balancing state. I enquired of him if Satan had first approached Adam or Eve. He said that he first went to Eve. I asked if the objective of Satan was to harm Eve or to do harm to Adam. I then put it to him that if Adam was his target why did he not go to Adam straight? Where was the necessity to make an encircling movement on the way? He answered that he did not go to Adam direct thinking that Eve was weak and that he would be able to prevail upon her easily and then she would manage to mislead Adam on her own, without any further ado on his part. I said that since Eve

was weaker than Adam and was the first to commit sin and was responsible for misleading Adam, how is it then that one born of Eve exclusively, was sinless. I said that taking into consideration the case of hot and cold water mixture, if we took Adam for cold water and Eve for hot water, the progeny born of their mixture, would certainly not be as sinful as the progeny born of Eve alone, and that, therefore, the Messiah who was born of Eve was more sinful than others. He asked if gold was not mined from dust. I told him that that formed the whole crux of the problem in dispute between us—that if gold could be mined from dust, then he could freely call Adam a sinner but must simultaneously concede that his progeny could be sinless and not necessarily invariably sinful. When I tackled him in that manner, he said that gold was not mined from dust but that it was mined from gold, and since Adam was sinful his progeny must necessarily be sinful and could not be sinless, for, gold was mined from gold. I answered that in that case Eve's son would have to be considered more sinful than others, for, she was more sinful than Adam inasmuch as she not only ate of the fruit of the tree herself but also made Adam eat it and thus became I doubly sinful. He lost his temper at that and said that gold was not quarried from a mine of dust and that the mine was of earth but that gold came out of it. I told him to keep the same in view in respect of Adam—that though he had sinned, there could be some

of his generation who would be pious and free from every sinful tendencies.

ONLY ALTERNATIVE FOR CHRISTIANS

Now the Christians have only one way of escape left and that is to assert that, in the case of the Messiah, the question of the sin of his parents cannot arise; that he was the Son of God and therefore free from every sin in his person; that, the question does not arise in his case that because of being of the children of Eve he was more sinful or less sinful than others, but that because of being the son of God he was free from sin. In other words, his being sinless was not due to his being born of his mother but because of his being the son of God. Our objection to it is that if there was no special philosophy underlying his being without a father, and because of his being the son of God, he was immune to the influence of his parents, even if he were to have a father, he would not imbibe his influence; and if the Messiah were to be born of a married woman and were to have a father, he would have all the same remained immune to the influence of Adam and Eve, for, his real status was that of the Son of God. When he had to be sinless in any case, why did then God commit a grave wrong in creating Jesus in a manner that has humiliated him in the whole world—all over

people say that he was not born in wedlock. (We seek refuge with Allah against such belief). When he was to be immune to the influence of his father and also to that of his mother, where was the need for this controversy and why did God cause hurt to Mary and the Messiah by placing them under this calumny? When he was the Son of God and free, in his essence, of all sin, he should have been born of a mother and a father so that he would be sinless on the basis of his own merit and would be saved from the slander of illegitimacy.

The Christians can very well point out here that we (Muslims) too hold that Jesus was born without a father with the result that the enemy is given a chance to level the calender that he was born out of wedlock, and that while we did not believe in his vicarious atonement and rejected at the same time the Christian viewpoint, wherefore then do we hold that the Messiah was born without a father? The answer is that according to us, the reason for the Messiah being born without a father is that God the Almighty had made a promise to Abram (peace be on him) that there would rise prophets in future from among his progeny and that the kingdom of God would remain with them till the heaven and the earth lasted. This promise was repeated through Prophets successively. This promise came to be fulfilled for centuries, so much so, that the people of the Mosaic dispensation became bold and came to believe that in no case would God

forsake the children of Abram and that prophethood and dominion could not go out of the Mosaic dispensation. The result was that the warnings of the Divine prophets began to be disregarded. Prophets would come and proffer their teachings but the Jews would only ridicule them, as for instance, Jeremiah and others came and the Jews rejected them outright, laughing them off and taking for granted that God had given them the bliss for good. Then God gave them through some prophets the tiding that a virgin would give birth to a son, meaning that the promised one would be only half-Israelite and half non-Israelite. This was a warning pointing out that if the Jews persisted in turning a deaf ear to the teachings of the prophets, then in future another prophet would rise who would neither be an Israelite from his father's side nor from his mother's side.

The promise was fulfilled in the person of Jesus—he was born without a father, and since the generation is carried forward from the father's side, it served as a notice to the Jews that half the prophethood had been taken away from them. They were thus told that the prophet sent at the time was not of the Jews from the father's side, and if they did not benefit by the admonition, the next prophet would be a non-Israelite, though of the stock of Abram. And so, it came to pass. Since Allah had made many promises to Abram (peace be on him) and would not brook depriving Jews of the benefits of these

promises, without sufficient cause, He first sent prophets in succession. When Prophets came to the Jews one after the other and they became entrenched in the belief that prophethood would not pass on to non-Israelites, God the Almighty administered warnings through Prophets in such a manner that the Jews, given a small modicum of faith, could have come to their senses and to a realization that something was impending on account of their wickedness. But they did not mend their ways and persisted in mischief-mongering. At last the Almighty God created the Messiah without a father, as He had fore-warned and gave the Jews to understand, that half the prophethood had been taken away from them and that if they desisted not from their ways, the remaining half would also be taken away from them by way of punishment; that the prophet who had been sent at the time was a Jew from his mother's side and was not so from his father's side, but that in future a Prophet would be raised who, though of Abram's stock, would be a non-Israelite.

Accordingly, after that Allah sent Muhammad the Prophet (peace and the blessings be on him), who was an Ishmalite, and chain of prophethood was cut off for ever from the Israelites. Therefore, our belief in the Messiah being without a father is noto pen to any criticism. According to us, a deep philosophy underlies it. But the theory they advance in this behalf has been turned

down by us, our stand being that it does not make the Messiah sinless and that, on the contrary, it shows him to be a greater sinner than others and nullifies vicarious atonement.

INADEQUACY OF MESSIAH'S SACRIFICE

Another point which deserves consideration in respect of the theory of vicarious atonement is whether the death of Jesus on the Cross could redeem the world. The answer is that even if we accept the New Testament version of the incident of crucifixion of Jesus, it is an event a study of which does not convince us that the Messiah made any sacrifice at all. For, according to the New Testament, the Messiah remained in the tomb for a day and a half; his crucifixion happened on Friday in the afternoon and on Sunday morning he was up and about. (St. Mark, Ch. 16)

From Friday night to Saturday evening, it would be a period of 24 hours and from Saturday evening to Sunday morning another 12 hours. It would thus mean that, in the light of the New Testament account, the Messiah stayed in the tomb for a total period of 36 hours. Suppose, the Christian belief that Jesus stayed in hell for a day and a half was correct, the question that still remains is how the Messiah's one-and-a-half day long stay in the tomb could atone for the sins of the world. According

to Christian belief, hell is eternal and whoso of men is consigned to it shall stay there for ever. But we hold that Allah will forgive after a while even the inmates of hell. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

أُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ

i.e., hell is like the mother's womb as a child is delivered of it after a period, so, shall the inmates of hell be discharged from it after staying in it for a time, and that Allah will admit them into paradise (Al-Qari'ah, 101:10). The Christian belief, on the contrary, is that hell is eternal and whoso enters hell shall never be able to get out of it. Now, there are, in the contemporary world, crores of men who believe in the Messiah. In this age there are some 60 to 70 crore Christians, perhaps more. If this 70 crore were to go to hell and stay there put forever, to what length of period would it work out, if we were to compute it by multiplying this number with eternity, and this just represents the number of present day Christians. If we compute the total number of the people who have believed in the Messiah from his own day, taking the average age of a generation at 30 years, and the average of the Christian population at ten crores—for, they were few before and then grew into a lakh, then too Iakhs, then seventy to eighty lakhs and later their numbers ran into crores till they were as many as 70 to 80 crores at a single point of time and taking ten crores

as an average of this and with three generations in a l00 years period, there having passed thus 57 generations of Christians up to the present time fifty-seven multiplied by 10 crore would make a total figure of 570 crore. Now let us multiply the punishment of this 570 crore men with eternity and see the result. In other words, if the Messiah would not offer atonement, these 570 crore men would have remained in hell eternally and it makes such a colossal period that it is beyond computation in terms of figures. But the Almighty Lord, by consigning His son to hell for a day and a half, accepted atonement in return for eternal punishment. It is claimed that the Messiah was crucified so that the justice of God remains without a blemish. In other words, if other people were to enter hell, they would have been kept there eternally, but when His own son was concerned, he was kept for a day and a half, and it was said that all had been redeemed thereby.

It has a likeness to a village story. It is said that some naughty boys of a village while playing outside, espied a dead donkey. They counselled among themselves to cook it and eat it up, as dead or alive, it was but flesh. Accordingly, they cooked the donkey meat and ate it. Village folk extremely dislike such things. As they came to know of it, they lost no time in going to their Mullah and telling him that a terrible thing had happened—the boys had cooked and ate up a dead donkey and they

feared lest some visitation from God overtake them. The *Mullah* said that a great sin had been committed and that atonement should be made forthwith as otherwise the wrath of Allah will be upon them. They were out of their wits already, the *Mullah* frightened them still more. Thereupon they asked the *Mullah* to find a way out of the predicament lest they should all be destroyed. The *Mullah* agreed and promised to tell them the remedy after consulting the books. Accordingly, he remained engrossed in consulting books of law throughout the day and informed the village folk in the evening that he had found the answer.

"It is written in the books that the atonement of this sin can be made by piling up loaves of bread around a perpendicularly placed beam till it covered its top-end and then giving away of these loaves in the name of God." In other words, he wanted them to give away the loaves to him, as whatever is given in the name of God, is made over to the Mullah. He thought he would have loaves free for a few days and whatever were saved, he could sell away. It was a small village and the people were poor. As they heard this, they were in a panic and pleaded to the Mullah that they could not afford to offer that much atonement. He warned them that if they would not, they would all land in hell and that the law was clear on the point that that was the only way to atone for the sin. They again consulted among themselves as to what they

should do next. A boy spoke out saying that the Mullah's own son Noor Jamal was also in it. They asked him if he was really speaking the truth. The other boys confirmed that he was with them. After mutual consultation, they decided to enquire of the Mullah again, hoping that he might modify the shape of the problem. Accordingly, they again called on the Mullah and told him that his son Noor Jamal was also in the party. On hearing this, the Mullah feared that he too would have to make atonement. He told them that he will again consult the books. After consulting the books, he announced that there was the alternate solution that if they could not afford that much, then the beam may be laid on the ground and covered with loaves and these few loaves could be given away as alms.

This is like the Noor Jamal episode. If 570 crore men have to be punished, they would suffer eternal punishment, but when it comes to His own son, it is said "We are doing Justice. By keeping him in hell for a day and a half, we take it that he has atoned for the sins of the whole world."

A BIG JOKE

The world still goes on and if it continued for another 500 or 1,000 years and though by the grace of God, because of Ahmadiyya, Christianity will decline day by

day and make no progress, still by the time we multiply, it will have added up another 300 to 400 crore to its numbers—but when the question of the atonement for the sins of such a vast number of men came up, it was said that by keeping the Son in hell for a day and a half, the sins of all had been redeemed and that the dictates of God's justice and equity had been satisfied. There could be no bigger joke than sentencing 570 crore men to eternal punishment and laying it down that they would never be delivered from hell but deciding in respect of His own son that since he lived in hell for a day and a half, the sins of all had been forgiven. Put this proposal before anybody without mentioning the Messiah and God. Just say this much that there was a person who owed people some 1,50,000 rupees. People demanded that he pay up but he could not. The matter was at last referred to the Court. He petitioned that the debt be written off. The Judge told him that he could not write it off as that would be against justice; that he could not commit the injustice of letting him off scot free while rupees one lakh and a half were outstanding against him. But later he called his son and asked him to pay one rupee and a half in recompense for the debt of rupees one lakh and a half and when he had paid rupee one and a half, he said that all the debt had been redeemed. Will any person who has his senses about him treat this judgment as reasonable? Everybody would condemn the judge not only as dishonest but also

as cunning and foxy for his having written off the public debt of Rs. 1,50,000 on receipt of a payment of Rupees l½ from his son. Similarly, the version of atonement that is put forward, far from mitigating the blame on God, only enhances it and such tricks hardly prove Him to be just; on the contrary He is proved to be unjust besides being a cunning trickster. If that was all He had intended doing, why keep him in hell even for a day and a half?

DID MESSIAH OFFER ATONEMENT?

Taking for granted all the claims of Christians that redemption was a possibility and that Messiah was the Son of God, the question that engages our attention is whether it has been proved that Messiah did really offer the sacrifice which could be called adequate for purposes of redemption. Messiah's coming down the Cross alive is a concept which carries in it the death of Christianity. If the Messiah came down the Cross alive, Christianity is finished totally and if the Messiah died a natural death after the incident of the Cross, then all the wrong beliefs that are current among non-Ahmadis would die out. In other words, the Messiah's coming down the Cross alive puts an end to Christianity and his natural death closes the chapter of innovation in Islam. If Christianity fades out, it would mean life for Islam and if innovation dies, then too there is life for Islam.

PROMISED MESSIAH'S ACHIEVEMENTS

The Promised Messiah (peace be on him and salutations) has accomplished both these achievements. By saving him from death on the Cross, he saved the Messiah on the one hand from an accursed death and on the other, gave a death blow to Christianity, and again saved Islam from innovation by establishing that the Messiah died a natural death. For, it is derogatory both to Islam and to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) that a prophet who neither profited by his faith nor partook of the fruit of his garden, should come to revive the religion of Islam; in fact, it finishes the whole of his mission. The Promised Messiah, through a dual attack, made short work both of Christianity and of innovation. Once he finished Christianity by showing up the Messiah as alive and again he finished innovation in Islam by showing up that he died a natural death. Both these are monumental achievements which shall be remembered as long as the world lasts. It is, however, a matter of regret that our community has not paid much heed to these achievements nor has it grasped their full import. The facts relating to the Messiah's whereabouts after the incident of the Cross are second line arguments which the Promised Messiah (peace and salutations be on him) has put forward. The crux of the matter is the Messiah's coming down the Cross alive. If he came off

the Cross alive, Christianity is finished. Christians are coming to realize this. Mr. Criltondon, Secretary General of Inter-fellowship, University of London, observed in the course of a speech in the London Mosque on March 11, 1956, that if the Ahmadiyya viewpoint about the death of Jesus was correct, Christianity would be no more and that if the Messiah did not really die on the Cross, the entire foundation of the Church is demolished and the whole of its edifice must come down to earth.

THE COMING MESSIAH

If, therefore, the Messiah died a natural death, the innovation among Muslims meets a short shrift and their entire gossamer is torn to bits and the erroneous beliefs they have long been involved in are falsified. For, if the Messiah died his natural death, the coming Messiah must rise from among the Muhammadan people, and for Islam and Muslims a great objective is at once reared up. The nations, whose hopes are dead, die out. But nations, whose hopes live, can never perish.

SIGNIFICANCE OF MAN

If, it is said that the difference between man and God is unlimited and since the condition of man is different from that of God, therefore, the punishment that man could undergo eternally was equal to the Son of God

remaining in hell for a day and a half and, therefore, the one-and-a-half-day visit of the Son of God to hell should not be a matter of surprise, in comparison with the eternal punishment to the entire mankind; that the torment they would suffer through eternity, the Messiah had suffered in a day and a half, then the answer to this is as follows:

When there is a limitless difference between God and man which even Christians admit, considering this very infinity of difference, it is not within human power to comprehend the extent of disparity between God and men. Something that, is limitless is beyond human comprehension. Only a limited quantity which is within the reach of ken, is susceptible of comprehension. Now when this incomprehensible disparity is kept in view against the belief that the collective punishment of 570 crore was made up by God going to hell for a day and a half and redeeming mankind thereby, it means, in other words, that they have computed the measure of the period it takes God to suffer the punishment that mankind should undergo. When the disparity between God and man is incomprehensible, how is it that they could estimate that all that cumulative suffering had been undergone by God in the course of a day and a half. In that case, it was not proper to keep him in hell even for a minute, nay, even, one thousandth of a second should more than suffice in His case. For, here

the comparison lay between man of limited powers and God of infinite powers, and it is a senseless thing indeed to make an estimation of God of unlimited powers in terms of the limited capacities of man. Even the period-limit of a second cannot be justified in His case. In fact, because of the incomprehensibility of the difference, even suffering for as long as the twinkling of the eye, should be impossible for God. How could they, under the circumstances, compute it at a day and a half and comprehend, with their limited capacities, in respect of God, the possessor of unlimited powers, that He bore in a day and a half the punishment that mankind would suffer for aeons and aeons of time.

WHO WENT TO HELL?

Again, the question is: who went to hell, the son of man or the Son of God? If the Son of man went, then it is understandable enough, since human soul originates from human body and is attached to it, it was his soul therefore, that, went to hell. But there was no other soul— the body was no doubt human, but there was the Son of God in it. And if the Son of God is delivered of the body, he at once becomes God. He is son of man so long as he is imprisoned in the human frame. When he is delivered of the human frame, he automatically becomes the Son of God, and when he becomes the son of God, he

becomes like God and when he becomes like God, there is no sense in his going to hell. Is God subject to cold and heat or does he feel comforted by cold and tormented by heat? If human soul goes to hell, it will feel the heat. If it is kept in a cold place, it will feel the cold. But the Son of God who is God is above heat and cold. Hell is as much His creation as is heaven. Hell can do him no harm nor would paradise give him any comfort. It occurs in the *Ahadith* (sayings of the Holy Prophet) that when God would put his foot in hell, hell would become cold, for, hell is no hell for God. If the Messiah, therefore, was son of man and possessed human soul, then it was not God who entered hell, but it was man who entered it. But if he carried the soul of the Son of God, then as soon as it was delivered of the body, it at once became Godlike, and as it became like God, even if it be taken to hell, it would suffer no torment. After all the Messiah did not have two souls that it could be said that one was human and the other was divine. He had only one soul and that of the Son of God and as it was delivered of the body, hell was no longer hell for it. Even if it is then taken to hell, it has no torment for it, for, it is above physical feelings, neither paradise has any effect on it nor has hell.

IS IT ALLEGORIC?

Christians, sometimes in dismay, say that all this

narrative is allegoric and we have no reason to treat it as factual. Our contention is that if all this is allegoric, novel theories cannot be deduced from allegories. In this case too the theory of redemption falls flat. For, when you are not making a factual statement but talking in allegory, there is no justification for you to deduce novel concepts from it and to invite people to believe in them. As, for instance, if we say in respect of somebody that he is a lion in the true sense of the word and when somebody wants us to point out his tail and his paws and we answer back that we were talking only allegorically and he was wrong in mistaking him for an actual lion, it will not be fair on our part to go on calling it a lion in the true sense of the word. If, therefore, this is an allegoric description, Christians must agree that the Messiah was described as the Son of God only allegorically, and if he was the Son of God allegorically, he could not bear the sins of mankind nor could he stay in hell for a day and a half. All these statements then become false and unreal.

Whenever they decline, their hopes sustain them and create in them a new awakening and alertness and they know that they have little ground for despair and that there are in wait great opportunities for them to achieve higher levels. But once the hopes of a people are killed, it perishes for ever. The Promised Messiah (peace and salutations be on him) has thus to his credit two outstanding achievements. On the one hand, he put an

end to Christianity by showing up that the Messiah was alive after he came off the Cross and, on the other hand, he saved Islam from erroneous belief, by pointing out, that in the light of the Quranic verses, the Messiah died a natural death. How much poetic beauty underlies this dissertation? He quickened the Messiah and made short work of Christianity, and he put an end to the Messiah's life and quickened Islam. Since the Church is founded on the basis that the Messiah died on the Cross, if it is proved that the Messiah did not die on the Cross, but came off it alive, the redemption theory is demolished at once.

WAS THE SACRIFICE ADEQUATE?

In short, the question that confronts us is whether the Messiah died on the Cross and whether he offered the sacrifice which could be adequate atonement. A study of the Bible gives the answer in the negative. Neither the Messiah died on the Cross, nor did he offer the sacrifice which could be termed as adequate atonement. If we carefully study the New Testament, it becomes evident that the real miracle of the Messiah on which Christianity prides itself and which finds so much prominence in the early stages of Christianity, was the miracle of the Prophet Jonas. Christians were a negligible quantity for a long time after the incident

of the Cross. They would escape to one country to seek shelter and then to another. Mostly they lived in hiding. For, whenever the people would get a scent of them, they would subject them to various kinds of tyrannies. Barring the early hardships they suffered at the hands of Jews in Palestine, they were persecuted mostly by pagan races, particularly the Romans. A Christian could not help asserting that the Messiah was the king of the world. But no sooner would he say this than the Romans would flare up and start tyrannizing them. The Jewish attack had slackened in those days; in fact, according to some evidence, it appears that whenever Christians would go in hiding, Jews would follow suit. For, their religions had much in common, and the Jews had not yet been so much alienated with the Mosaic Law as they are at present but were in fact given to observing it. As we offer prayers and so do the non-Ahmadis and we fast and the non-Ahmadis also fast and we go to the Haj pilgrimage and so the non-Ahmadis go to the Haj and we believe in the Quran and so do the non-Ahmadis. If one were to see the form, without going into the difference in beliefs, he would conclude that there was no difference between the Ahmadis and the non-Ahmadis. Similarly, the Jews believed in the Torah as much as did the Christians, and, the Jews were as much given to alms-giving as were the Christians, and, as the Christians considered the teachings of the Torah of practical significance so did

the Jews and, since the entire teaching appeared to be common to both, therefore whenever the Romans would get inflamed against Christians and start oppressing them, they would oppress the Jews as well taking them as part of them. No doubt the Jews were first responsible for their persecution, but the position changed later and whenever the Romans oppressed, they oppressed both the Christians and the Jews, making no distinction between the two. Therefore, whenever Christians sought for shelter, the Jews also would go into hiding with them. Some ruins found in Rome confirm this.

EARLY CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED

I think the Christians showed great courage in the face of bitter opposition in Rome and the cruel hardships which the Government inflicted on them in concentrating heavily on preaching there. They had powerful missions in Rome. There, people used to oppose them on account of their missionary activity, oppress them and take over their properties. But tyranny does not last long. They used to beat them up at first but would leave them alone later as Hindus lose their temper in contemporary India at certain places and start Muslim-baiting but after a time conditions become calm. The tyranny raises its head in another area and after some time calm settles down there.

Their first main centre was in Rome, another in Antioch and the third centre was in Alexandria. In all the three centres, Christian missionaries used to be assaulted and the enemy would either kill them or hurt them. Because of these recurring attacks, Christians would take to hiding in their houses or run away to suburban villages or make hide-outs underground. In those days some people used to make their sepulchres underground and would excavate stones for the purpose from the earth. Christians would clear up the cavities that were made after excavating stones and make their quarters there. There are many such places in Rome where Christians took refuge for a long time. These are called catacombs. There are still extant many pictures which they drew to keep their religious zeal or the memory of their martyrs alive. Similarly, there are tomb stones giving the identity of the person and the incidents leading to his martyrdom. I have seen a part of these catacombs. I could not see the whole of the area. It is spread over seventy miles. In brief, a view of the catacombs gives an idea of the ancient history of Christianity; for, the catacombs put into perspective the picture of tyrannies that preceded the expansion of Christianity and the inscriptions on tablets and the drawings reveal the beliefs of the Christians of the age. In the third century of the Christian era, the Emperor of Rome had embraced Christianity and Christianity gained strength henceforward.

THE STORY OF CATACOMBS

An idea of the conditions pertaining to the earlier period is gained through a visit to the catacombs. In these catacombs, we generally come across three drawings, one of the Noah's ark, the other of a shepherd with a flock of sheep around him and the third of a fish swallowing up the Prophet Jonas. It shows that the foundation of Christianity in early history was laid on only three things, or, in other words, three concepts which were symbolic for Christianity. The portrait of the shepherd hinted that the Messiah had come to gather the lost sheep or Jews; the Noah's ark signified that the Messiah was their saviour and the picture of the prophet Jonas signified the miracle which will be discussed in the following pages. In short, it was hinted through these drawings that Christianity was based on three fundamentals: (l) the Messiah came to gather his lost sheep. (2) The Messiah is the saviour and (3) the Messiah was give the sign that the Prophet Jonas was given.

REAL MIRACLE OF CHRISTIANITY

The Christian church is evidently based on this miracle, nay, Christianity claims it to be the only miracle, and all the drawings and paintings of the early period which

are found in Christian literature point to this— the picture of the shepherd who has been shown with the flock of his sheep, the drawing of the Noah's ark, and the picture portraying the entry or the Prophet Jonas in the belly of the fish. It shows that this was the real miracle of Christianity, The Messiah himself characterizes it as his singular and real miracle. The New Testament says, the Messiah (peace be on him) said in the course of a sermon, "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas; For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matthew 12:38-40)

MESSIAH'S BASIC SIGN

The Messiah (peace be on him) did not say in answer to them that he had shown them many signs, why would they not benefit from them. Nor did the Messiah tell them that he would yet show them many signs. On the contrary, he said that they would be given no sign but the sign of Prophet Jonas. This makes it plain that the Messiah declares this sign as his only sign. It is evident that there has been no prophet of God who showed only

one sign. Even from the New Testament, it is clear that the Messiah showed numerous other signs. Therefore, the Messiah's answer that "there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas" means that so far as, Judaism is concerned, the basic sign of the Messiah was that of the Prophet Jonas. And, as I have explained before, the testimony of the Christians of the early period also confirms this. And the truth is that a Christian of the early period was qualified to grasp the mission of Christianity. Of their pictures the first drawing relates to the incident of the Prophet Jonas which points out that Christians of the early age believed that the sign of the Prophet Jonas was the basic sign of the Messiah. The other two drawings are supplementary to it, for, the sign of the Prophet Jonas carries in it salvation and it holds at the same time the likeness of the shepherd, as I will explain at a later stage; for the reason that after the incident of the Cross, the Messiah went to Iran, Afghanistan and Kashmir to gather together his lost sheep and delivered to them the message of God. Besides the Messiah himself declares that there was only one sign that the generation of the time would be given and that was the sign of the Prophet Jonas. The only sign means the one important sign and the only reliable sign. In short, even the Christian of the early period accepts the fact that the real glory of Christianity is reflected only through the sign of the Prophet Jonas and the Messiah

also characterizes it as his singular and magnificent miracle. St. Luke says the same. It reads:

> "This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of Jonas the Prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the son of man be to this generation."
> (St. Luke 11 :29-30)

St. Luke has reported one thing more here. St. Matthews ended his report with "and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the Prophet Jonas; for Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Here St. Matthews has stated only this much:

> "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here." (Matthew 12:141)

St. Luke, however, stresses the point that "as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall the son of man be to this generation." In other words, he says in respect of this sign that the way Jonas was a sign for the inhabitants of Nineveh, so shall the Messiah be for the generation of the period.

It is clearly evident from these references that the real sign that was to be given to the age of the Messiah was that of the Prophet Jonas. In this behalf the Messiah himself says "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

SIMILARITY IN FEATURES

Here the Messiah (peace be on him) has explained what the sign of the Prophet Jonas stands for. He says as Jonas stayed three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, so shall the son of man stay for three days and three nights in the bowels of the earth. Resemblance does not mean similarity in all the details. It means only a similarity in basic features. It is on the basis of this sort of similarity that the Messiah says that as Jonas stayed for three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall he stay in the tomb. The significance of this sign was that the Messiah should stay in the tomb three days and three nights like the Prophet Jonas under the protection of God. Certainly, the entry of someone in the belly of the fish does not constitute a miracle. Thousands go into the belly of the fish and nobody calls it miraculous. What was then the miracle of the Prophet Jonas? His miracle was that he remained in the belly of the fish, in the care of God, so that his person should be a sign of God to his

people. Now let us see how the Prophet Jonas remained in the whale's belly three days and three nights.

STORY OF JONAS

We refer to the book of Jonas for this. It is mentioned therein:—

"Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. (Nineveh was a big city. The Lord God commanded Jonah to go there arid admonish its peop1e). But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish; so, he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord." Instead of following the commandment of God like other prophets and going to preach to the people of Nineveh, it occurred to him that Allah being Compassionate and Over-Generous, He issued warnings of impending chastisement first and later on, people humbly beseeching Him, forgave them, with the result that the prophets were treated as liars by the people, Jonah finding that he could not stand this, decided against going to Nineveh and proceeded to Tarshish instead.

"But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them." (In ancient times there used to be sail ships which could not carry heavy cargo; whenever a storm would come and the ship would be in danger of sinking, they would throw overboard part of the cargo to lighten its weight). "But Jonah was gone down into the side of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep." (While the other people prayed and lightened the burden of the boat, Jonah, lay asleep inside). "So, the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. And they said everyone to this fellow. Come and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So, they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah, Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? And whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou? And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew." (Incidentally, we would like to point out here that this statement of the Bible is incorrect. Jonah was not an Hebrew; he was a Prophet of another race, for, he was sent to the people of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria and its inhabitants were Assyrians. Assyria is a

different country from Syria. It extended from north of Babylon to the borders of Armenia and its eastern frontier touched Kurdistan; on the west it comprised a part of the territory lying off the west of the Tigris part of modern Mesopotamia. Once it was a powerful state with Assyria as its capital lying sixty miles in the north of Mosul— it is now known as Kalaat Sharjat. But some 13 centuries before Christ, the capital was shifted from this place to Nineveh. European scholars are divided in their opinion about Jonah being a prophet of lsrael or of non-Israel origin). "And I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them."

"Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto Thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not; for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee. So they took up Jonah,

and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord and made vows. Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. "Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, and said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about; all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul; the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever; yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption; O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord. And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

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and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to bring *it* to the land; but they could not; for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee. So, they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord and made vows. Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

"Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, and said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about; all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul; the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever; yet hast thou brought

up my life from corruption; O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay *that* that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord. And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

"And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So, Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three day's journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So, the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them, For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying. Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let men and beast be covered with sackcloth and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from

the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

"But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, *was* not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore, I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou *art* a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. Therefore, now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live."

"Then said the Lord, Doest thou well to be angry? So, Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city. And the Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief." (The Bible says, he first made a booth and then God made a creeping plant grow, while there was no purpose in making a gourd plant grow after a booth had been raised, for, a booth is much more comfortable. The Holy Quran, however, makes no mention of a booth though it speaks of a plant

which sounds definitely to be a reasonable and correct statement).

> "So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live. And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death. Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" (Jonah 1:4)

This is the story of Jonah to whom Jesus has made an allusion. Its perusal shows that when Prophet Jonah received the word of God to go forth to preach to his

people, it occurred to him that when a prophet preaches to his people, he also receives a share of fore-warnings of fearsome happenings but God the Almighty out of compassion for His creatures, deals by them mercifully and as a result the prophets lose face; therefore instead of proceeding on his mission to his people, he made a bid to escape to another country in order to save himself from the humiliation he feared he would suffer at the hands of his people. But God the Almighty had decreed that he should go forth to the inhabitants of Nineveh and deliver to them the message of the Lord. Accordingly, He planned it so that he was cast in the sea and then He commanded a big fish to swallow him up which gorged him alive. According to the statement of the Bible, he prayed to the Lord when he was in the belly of the fish. Since only a living person can pray and not a dead corpse, it is clear that he entered the belly of the fish alive and so long as he was in it, he remained alive. Then the fish disgorged him as Allah wished that it should, on the land and not in the sea. He was then commissioned by the Almighty Lord to go to preach to the people of Nineveh. He went there accordingly and was successful in his mission. It is evident from this miracle that:

(1) Prophet Jonah entered the belly of the fish alive.

(2) He remained three days and nights alive

in it.

(3) He came out of it alive.

(4) His preaching term started after he came out of the fish's belly.

He did not first apprise the people of his mission to reform them; possibly he told a few persons but the masses in general had no inkling of it. He fled from there wishing to escape to some other country; but after the incident of the fish, Allah the Mighty forced him back to his own country where He commanded him to preach. He accordingly undertook preaching and the people believed in him. After fully grasping the import of this miracle, no one can deny the implication that this incident applies to the Messiah only when

(1) He enters the sepulchre alive

(2) Remains therein alive

(3) Comes out of it alive and

(4) Gets a lease of successful preaching term after his escape from the tomb.

BASIC POINTS

These are the four features deducible from the incident of Prophet Jonah. If the Christian version of Christ's

death on the Cross is correct, then these four points are falsified altogether, namely (1) If the Messiah gave up ghost on the Cross and did not enter the grave alive and (2) if the Messiah remained in the tomb dead three days and nights but that he remained in hell he can have no resemblance with the Prophet Jonah, for, the Prophet Jonah remained three days and nights alive in the fish's belly and he was at peace with God the Almighty as he kept praying to Him. On the contrary, firstly the Messiah entered the tomb dead and then he remained in hell. In other words he was alienated from God the Almighty. (3) Again, if the Messiah rose from the grave alive, a second time, he is, even in this respect, far short of being the like of the Prophet Jonah. For, the Prophet Jonah did not rise a second time from the fish's belly; he was alive first, he remaind alive also in the fish's belly and alive did he come out of it. (4)If after his rising from the grave, the mission of Jesus came to an end as Christianity says that he remained in hell for three days to atone for the sins of mankind and after rising from the dead, he ascended to heaven to sit on the throne of his father, he has not the least resemblance with the Prophet Jonah. For, the miracle of Jonah was that Allah the Mighty granted him a successful term of preaching after he came out of the fish's belly. And as a matter of fact the real miracle that God Almighty showed the world was this—"Look, Jonah turned down My word and would not become

My messenger; he feared that he would be humiliated and that people would not accept him. Accordingly he made off but We put him in the fish's belly and kept him alive in it and later We ordered the fish and it disgorged him on land. We then made him go to Nineveh and he preached and was successful in his mission."

The Almighty God thus made it manifest that "whomso He raises as His Prophet, howsoever weak he may think himself to be and howsoever humble the people of the world may regard him to be, Allah the Mighty, has the power to make His message flourish through him and to make him popular with the people. This is the true sign of Jonah that was shown to the inhabitants of Nineveh. But if the Christian version of the Messiah's incident is accepted, he cannot be proved to have the slightest resemblance with Jonah. For, the true miracle of the Prophet Jonah was that he was granted a term of preaching and people witnessed that the self-same person who had made off fearing on account of his own weakness, proved a successful reformer and people on accepting him made an intrinsic change. As against this, when the Prophet Jonah entered the belly of the fish, the inhabitants of Nineveh did not see him. When he was alive in the fish's belly they did not see him then either: nor did they see him when he came alive out of the fish's belly. There lay then between him and the inhabitants of Nineveh a distance of some five to seven hundred miles,

nay, even as much as a thousand miles. Wherefore could they see that Jonas entered the fish's belly, or, that he had remained alive in it or had come out of it alive? Of all these things not one could the people of Nineveh see. The Ninevites saw him not when he entered the fish's belly; nor did they see him when he stayed alive in its belly and nor did they see him when the fish disgorged him. But when Jonah went back to the people of Nineveh and they saw that it was the same person that had taken to flight in fear, and God the Almighty had forced him back and granted him success where he thought there were no prospects, this became a mighty sign of the dominion and power of the Almighty God which the people of Nineveh witnessed. The Messiah had similarly claimed about himself:

> "For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation." (Luke 11:30)

WHAT NINEVEH SAW?

Now the question is what did the people of Nineveh witness?

The Ninevites did not see Jonah enter the belly of the fish; they did not see him living in it, nor did they see him coming out of it. All they saw was that a man received

the revelation commanding him to go forth and call the people of Nineveh to God. But he lacked the courage to deliver to them the message of the Almighty and fled away, seeking to escape to another country. But, after he had suffered many hardships and disasters, God forced him back to the Ninevites , and they were compelled to accept his message. Hence if the Ninevites witnessed any sign, this was the only sign. There is no doubt about it that his going into the belly of the fish was a sign, so was his staying alive in the fish's belly a sign and likewise was his coming alive out of it a sign. But all these signs are such as were not witnessed by the inhabitants of Nineveh. The only sign they saw was that a misgiving occurred in the heart of the Prophet Jonah and he went away from there, not wishing to deliver the message of prophethood to the people. But from hundreds of miles and through different kinds of hardships, God brought him back to his people again and fulfilled the mission for which He had raised Jonah. People rejected him and offered opposition to him. But in the end, they had to bow down to him. This was the sign that the Ninevites witnessed. There can, therefore, be a sign also of the Messiah only when he enters the tomb alive, remains in the tomb alive and comes out of the tomb alive. But all this the enemy will have not witnessed. This will be followed by the latter part of the sign: that he should preach to the lost sheep of Israel, settled at that time near

about Nineveh and in Iran, Afghanistan and Kashmir and bring them into the fold of his faith and thus succeed in the mission God had entrusted to him. If it come about, the Messiah's similarity to the Prophet Jonah will have been established and the sign he promised to show become manifest to the world. But if it did not happen that way, the sign of Jonah would not have come to pass.

WHERE IS THE PROMISED SIGN?

In short, as the Prophet Jonah preached to his people after he came out of the fish's belly and succeeded in his mission, in like manner should the Messiah have, after his exit from the tomb, preached to the Israelites and brought them to the right path. If he has not accomplished that, the sign of Jonah has not been implemented and it cannot be said that he showed the sign that the Prophet Jonah showed to his people. The Ninevites saw with their own eyes that the man who had run away from their midst, because he thought himself to be inadequate, and evaded the call to deliver the message of his Lord, came back to them and they were compelled to believe in him. But if the Messiah fades out after the incident of the Cross, how does his similarity to Jonah come about and where is the sign that the people witnessed as had the Ninevites? In other words the sign that the Messiah had to show as did the Prophet Jonah, which purported to demonstrate

how the Almighty God gets His purpose served through such people as regard themselves to be inadequate, he did not show, while the part that the Prophet Jonah did not show to the people, the Messiah did. Jonah entered the belly of the fish without the Ninevites having seen this sign. Jonah remained alive in the fish's belly but the people of Nineveh did not witness this sign either. Jonah came out of the fish's belly alive; again the inhabitants of Nineveh did not see this miracle. After this when Allah brought Jonah back to Nineveh, he demonstrated to the people his work, to wit, that nobody can run away from the Almighty God—he had run away but had been forced by God back to them. This was the sign the people saw and whoever reflects even in a superficial manner, would be compelled to glorify God and treat it as a wondrous miracle. Jonah did not consider himself to be worthy of the office of God's prophet and in panic he made off to another country. But God taking hold of him brought him back to the Ninevites and when he delivered the message, the very Ninevites about whom he had entertained misapprehension believed in him and bowed down to him. As one ponders this miracle, one is forced to believe in the powers of Allah and to marvel how great is Allah the Lord of Might, He grants honour to whomso He pleases and gives to whomso He pleases. But if Jonah had told the people that he had remained alive in the fish's belly or had come out of it alive, they

would have refused to believe, treating the claim as a lie and a falsehood. The Messiah's likeness, therefore, to Prophet Jonah could have been complete only when he would enter the tomb alive, stay in the tomb alive and come out of it alive, like Prophet Jonah and after the incident of the Cross successfully preach to a part of the Israelites. But the New Testament informs us that the Messiah showed to the people the sign that Jonah did not, and did not show them the sign that Jonah did. The New Testament says that the Messiah showed to the people the sign of entering the tomb, of staying therein and of coming out of it. The Bible says that the sign that Jonah showed the Ninevites was that after coming out of the fish's belly, he preached and the inhabitants of Nineveh had to believe in him. The New Testament, however, says that the Messiah simply vanished away after he rose from the tomb and did no preaching. Evidently, therefore, the sign that Jonah showed and which was a substantial sign, the Messiah did not show, but the one he did not show, the Messiah did.

CROSS CANCELS JONAS'S SIGN

Again, the Old Testament says that Jonah entered the fish's belly alive, stayed there alive and came out of it alive but the Christians aver that the Messiah entered the grave while dead, remained therein three days

dead and rose again from it alive. If this version of the Christians is true, then the Messiah failed to show the sign of the Prophet Jonah; but if he showed the sign of the Prophet Jonah and did not die on the Cross, nor did he stay dead in the tomb, the theory of redemption is finished. For, atonement stands proved only when it is accepted that the Messiah bore the sins of people by hanging on the Cross. If, however, he remained alive, it is clearly established that he offered no sacrifice and when no sacrifice was offered, redemption is automatically ruled out.

In short, the incident of the Cross which Christians hold forth goes wholly against the signs shown by Jonah and promised by Messiah to his people.

MESSIAH SHOWED JONAS'S SIGN

Now we would examine whether the purport of the prophecy relating to the Prophet Jonas deduced by us has been touched upon in any prophecy of the Messiah. When we carefully ponder over the New Testament, we are wonderstruck to find the Messiah saying the same thing. Further, even the Prophets who preceded the Messiah and foretold of his advent, have hinted at it. For

instance Isaiah says:

> "The Lord God which gathered the outcast of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him."(Isaiah 56:8)

Here the Prophet Isaiah foretells of a time when Lord God would again gather the lost sheep of Israel and will send a prophet around whom they will all gather. The prophecy of Isaiah here relates to the Messiah, for, there has been none besides him, to claim that he had come to gather the lost sheep of Israel. These lost sheep are the ten tribes of Israel which the then Iraq State destroyed in a campaign in Nebuchadnezzar's period. A deplorable feature of this invasion was that the Jews were divided amongst themselves at the time and engaged in internecine hostilities. The Jews had then two States—one was called Israel and the other was known as Jew, the former held Jerusalem and the latter had a separate centre. When the Iraq State launched an attack on the Jewish State to destroy it, one section of the Jews joined it out of hostility to the other group. The result was that due to the mutual animosities of Jews, the Iraqi State overran the territory and destroyed all the holy places of the Jews; even the synagogue of Jerusalem which was built by Solomon (peace be on him) was desecrated through pig slaughter in its precincts, and many other

acts of carnage were committed.

TEN TRIBES

Since the Jews were long in opposition to the state, the latter decided to extirpate them totally. Accordingly, of the twelve Israel tribes, ten were taken captive and scattered all over the eastern territory. Only two tribes remained in Palestine. These were the two tribes that had gone against their own people to the help of the enemy.

The enemy was, therefore, considerate to them. However, the ten tribes, scattered over the eastern countries, are briefly said in the Bible, to have been scattered east of Iran. Our research, however, shows that these territories were Afghanistan and Kashmir, but, since long distance had intervened and the Babylonians also worked to the end that these tribes should not go back, their account has long remained behind a veil. Again, they had not deported all the Jews to the East but kept some of them for attendance on them in Babylon and its suburbs. These latter returned to their homeland with the help of the Kings of Fars and Media and rehabilitated the settlements of Jerusalem. These Jews find a mention also in the Holy Quran. But the repatriation of those who had been deported to Kashmir and Afghanistan was a difficult matter. They had lived among the Buddhists a long time and imbibing their cultural influences had

forgotten their own traditions and their own culture and civilization. There was, therefore, little chance of their return. The Jews believed about these people that the Messiah would gather the lost sheep back to the nation as prophesied by the Prophet Isaiah.

MESSIAH'S TARGET

The prophecy of the Prophet Isaiah which gave the Jews the hope that their lost sheep would reunite with their brethren is the one I have mentioned above. The Messiah (peace be on him) has reverted to this subject on several occasions: once he sent a body of his disciples to preach. The directions he gave the disciples on the occasion contained besides others, the following advice:

> "Go not into the way of the gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."(Matthew 10:5-6)

He gave this advice so that the prophecy, that the Prophet Isaiah made, comes true; that the Israelites who have been lost would be gathered through him. He advised them against betaking themselves to gentiles and enjoined that they should go only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel and preach to them.

Similarly, it is mentioned in St. Matthews (152:1-28)

that the daughter of a woman was sick. (It appears that people in those days were generally under the impression that devils made men sick and that if the devils were cast out, the patient recovered). She had heard that the Messiah cast out devils. Once she saw the Messiah going somewhere and ran after him shouting and calling him the holy one of God, that he might come and cast out the devil from her daughter. But the Messiah would not pay her any heed, for, the woman was of the Gentiles. She nevertheless, continued crying after him and begging of him to save her child from the devil. When the disciples saw the woman thus crying after him, they besought him saying the woman was coming after him crying from a long distance begging that he cast the devil out of her daughter. The Messiah thereupon said,

> "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."(Matthew 15:24)

The Messiah thereby meant that his principal mission was to preach to the ten tribes of the house of Israel that had been lost and to re-establish them in their faith. It appears that through revelation the prophets had learnt that these tribes had forgotten their own faith through contact with foreign race and were no longer observing the Mosaic law and God had willed that they be reclaimed to their own faith. The term 'lost sheep' connotes that they were not only apparently gone away

to foreign lands but that they had also imbibed the influence of alien faiths and were thus lost physically as well as spiritually. It is therefore that the Messiah said that no sign would be shown to the Jews but the sign of the Prophet Jonah—that that would be his biggest sign. He had likewise stressed that his main mission was to gather the lost sheep of Israel. To the same effect is a statement of the Messiah occurring in St. John:

> "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."(St.John 10:16)

ONE FOLD, ONE SHEPHERD

Here the Messiah makes it plain that these Jews lived in some foreign country, for, he says, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold," i.e., they are not of this country and are, on the contrary, living in another land and that, it is a matter settled and decreed for me, that I should bring them back; that these sheep have rejected me but "they shall hear my voice" and accept me.

Rejection of a prophet is not something extraordinary. What the Messiah, however, means to say is that these people rejected him out of stubbornness, but they shall not so reject him on the contrary, they would readily believe in him "and shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

These words also denote there that a large section of the people of Moses had abandoned the Mosaic law and God had willed that they all be brought back to the Mosaic faith through the Messiah so that He may make them all one people.

These references show that through preceding prophets, it was foretold about the Messiah's Mission that (1) he would deliver the message as much to the Jews of the eastern countries as to the Jews of Palestine. (2) According to the Messiah, while the sheep of Palestine believed in him but little, the other sheep will hear his voice with greater attention and believe in him readily and that (3) It was incumbent on the Messiah to go forth to them and to deliver to them the message.

These three points emerge from these references: Firstly, there are some Jewish tribes outside the land of Jews to whom the Messiah would deliver his message; secondly, the Messiah's visit to them is not a matter left to his option: his visiting them and communicating the message to them are definite duties.

If these three features are compared to the sign of the Prophet Jonah, the two make similar reading. The Prophet Jonah was also sent to a foreign land. Facts are there for anyone to study. Jonah was not a resident of Nineveh. He was called through revelation to go forth to preach to the people of Nineveh which lay in the east.

In the same way, the Messiah was commanded to go to a foreign land lying in the east and deliver the message there. Again, it appears from the story of Jonah that God had forced him to go to that country; he had in fact fled from there wishing not to go to Nineveh. God, however, forced him back to Nineveh. Similarly, the prophecy indicated that God will force the Messiah out of his country to a foreign land and deliver the message through him to the lost sheep of the Jews. And further that when he would go there, people would receive him well and accept his claim.

What befell the Prophet Jonah was this: he entered the fish's belly, he remained in the belly of the fish for three nights and days and then the fish disgorged him on land and when he recovered, Allah commanded him to go forth to Nineveh and deliver to the Ninevites His message. Thus it dawned on him that he could not run away from the situation, howsoever, he might try, that he had to abide by the Will of God. Accordingly, he returned and communicated to the Ninevites the Divine message. At first they offered a mild opposition but, as soon as signs of Divine punishment became evident, they believed.

JESUS IN FOOTSTEPS OF JONAH

In short, when we compare these references with the references about the prophecy relating to the Prophet Jonah, we find that the sign of the Prophet Jonah which the Messiah had to show, did not consist only in the Messiah entering the tomb alive, staying in the tomb alive and rising from the tomb alive; it indicated yet another fact—the fourth and by far the most important, that like the Prophet Jonah, the Messiah will go to the lost tribes of Israel and communicate to them the word of God and that they will hear him and that it will be a sign which the lost sheep of Israel will witness as did the people of Nineveh. At a glance it will be apparent that the Messiah had to go through similar happenings. Messiah was born in Palestine. His tongue was Hebrew. His mother was also in Palestine and so was his so-called father as also the other sons of this father and his cousins. Besides, they had there all the people of their tribe, their native customs, their own culture and tradition. All these things have very great importance and one is deeply attached to these. But the country to which he was being deputed was a foreign land and the Messiah had no connection with it. There was a vast divergence between the language of Afghanistan and that of Palestine. The two had nothing in common. The Israelites had through inter-mingling adopted the customs and traditions and culture of the Buddhists and other people and

reconverting them was no ordinary job. Besides, the way to Afghanistan and Kashmir from Palestine was difficult and full of hazards. There existed no facilities and on top of it the long journey of two and a half thousand miles was a hard task. Therefore the Messiah was afraid of setting out to Afghanistan and Kashmir as was the Prophet Jonah afraid of going to Nineveh. For, by going over there, he to give up his tongue, leave his people and his dear and near ones. An easy course was that the Messiah should live among his own people and staying back in Palestine continue preaching to the Jews. But as the Prophet Jonah sought to evade and God put pressure on him through creating circumstances that forced him back to Nineveh and made him realize that there was no sense in running away from the Almighty God and that he must: therefore, betake himself to wherever the Lord wanted him to go; similarly in the case of Messiah, God created conditions which led to a general opposition against him, so much so, that he was involved in a case, had to appear before a court, and the court finally sentenced him to be hanged and he had to suffer hanging on the Cross. It is another thing that God Almighty saved him, in accordance with His prophecy, as he had saved Jonah; as when the Prophet Jonah was cast into the sea, He appointed a fish which swallowed him up, and he remained in the fish's belly alive three nights and days and came out of the belly of the fish alive

and when he saw this, his faith gained fresh vigour and he marvelled how great was the might of the Lord and how wondrously He managed to protect His servants. In like manner was the Messiah taken off the Cross alive, stayed in the tomb alive and came out of it alive, with the result that his faith was reinvigorated and he knew that God had marvellous powers. But as he came out of the tomb, under the impact of circumstances, he was forced to hit out for the country where God the Almighty wanted him to go. For, one who was condemned to death by the court but was saved, could not stay in the land as he would be liable to be hanged again, if apprehended. In short, the Almighty God created such conditions as compelled him to quit for Kashmir and Afghanistan, in the manner of the Prophet Jonah. There is no doubt about it that a Prophet is never afraid of death in the cause of God, but, all the same, a Prophet cannot reconcile himself to an idle life. He is born for work and loves work. He is a machine which operates constantly. The Messiah could not therefore agree to spend the rest of his days in hiding hither and thither. While, therefore, this incident further strengthened his faith, at the same time, it helped to speed up his departure from Palestine for the east like the Prophet Jonah, to preach the word of God.

MESSIAH IN KASHMIR

The Messiah's account of these events given to the ten tribes and his narration of the circumstances leading to his visit to them must have immensely strengthened their faith and evoked in them, sentiments of thankfulness to God. Histories of Kashmir show that the Messiah's wounds were still green yet when he entered Kashmir. It appears that the surgeons of the time were not so good. It is said that when the Prince Prophet reached Kashmir, he had wounds on his hands and feet which the surgeons took long to treat. When the Messiah narrated to them the circumstances through which Allah forced him out of Palestine to Kashmir, telling them he would have been liable to be re-hanged, had he stayed back, how greatly must those people have marvelled with pride at their own good fortune. There is not the least doubt about it that God the Almighty had the power to save him yet again. Had they put him again to the Cross, He would have saved him again but it would have meant repeated hanging on the Cross and getting off it because of which the Messiah would not have been able to do any preaching. In short, the narration of these events must have enhanced greatly the love of God in their hearts as they would wonder how He forced a prophet to visit their land so that they might be guided aright. Some, however, must have offered opposition; for, opposition is inevitable.

A WELCOME RECEPTION

But history confirms that those people soon became devoted to the Messiah readily believing him to be a prophet.

In brief, under the circumstances, God compelled him to go there. If we do not accept this explanation, leave alone the theory of redemption, the Messiah loses even the status of a truthful and true man. For, he clearly says that he would enter the tomb alive, and stay in the tomb alive and come out of the tomb alive and that after all these events his journey to the lost tribes was unavoidable, so that his likeness to the Prophet Jonah is established. Now when did Jonah go to the inhabitants of Nineveh to preach? The answer is, when he came out of the fish's belly. Similarly, the real period of work for the Messiah came when he rose from the grave. If it had not so happened and the Messiah had not preached after rising from the tomb and had not gathered the lost sheep, he would be proved to be a liar and so also Isaiah and other Prophets who foretold that he would gather together the lost sheep of Israel. (We seek refuge with God against such belief).

These incidents conclusively establish that it was not ordained that the Messiah should die on the Cross or offer atonement. The theory of redemption makes it impossible to accept the Messiah as a righteous person;

for thus, his greatest prophecy turns out to be false and so also the word that was revealed to Isaiah and what was foretold by some other prophets. It is established therefore, that Jesus did not offer the sacrifice which is ascribed to him by those who subscribe to the theory of vicarious atonement; nor did he make any atonement.

STORY OF CRUCIFIXION

Now we shall examine whether the incident that took place confirms the fact that Jesus would enter the tomb alive, would stay in the tomb alive and come out of the tomb alive or it establishes the fact that he entered the tomb dead, remained in the tomb dead and rose out of it resurrected. I would mention here some basic facts pertaining to this end which make it clear that the Messiah did not die on the Cross.

The foremost point is the fact that the officer before whom the Messiah was hauled up was a well-wisher of Jesus and a friend of some of his followers. Of the Messiah's followers who had not yet become his disciples openly but believed in him at heart, one was Joseph Arimathea. According to the New Testament, being a respectable and wealthy person among the Jews, he was a friend of Pilate and when Messiah appeared before Pilate, he tried

quite a number of times that the Messiah may be let off on one ground or the other. Of the devices he resorted to in this behalf, one was this: It was on Friday when the Messiah appeared before him and the Sabbath Day, the holy festival day of Jews, fell on the morrow. The same day was a special holiday when the Roman State used to set at liberty a prisoner to please the Jews so that they should feel that the State held religion in esteem and thought particularly well of their religion. Considering that on account of this festival, one or the other prisoner must be set free, Pilate tried to set the Messiah free. But the Jews refused to agree to the proposal and would rather get a thief to be set at liberty insisting that the Messiah should not be freed (Matthew 27:21-22). There occur many disparities in the New Testament in this regard and there is no use going into these at the moment. In any case, they would not let the Messiah be set at liberty. While Pilate was yet pursuing his endeavours to release the Messiah on his personal initiative, a messenger came to his court saying that he had been sent by his wife. As Pilate rose to hear him, the messenger told him that his wife had sent him with the word that she had no sleep last night as the angel warned her again and again that this man was innocent and should not be persecuted, otherwise they would die. When Pilate heard this, he made a further attempt to persuade the Jews to agree that the Messiah should be released. But they were adamant.

Instead, they threatened to write to the Emperor that Pilate had set at liberty a man who claimed to be king, which meant that Pilate was also a rebel. When he heard this he was frightened and sent for water. Jews were given to talking in parables. Pilate washed his hands in the presence of them all, and said that he would not bear the responsibility of sin and was innocent of the blood of "this just person," and that the sin of it, if any would lie on them and on their children. Thereupon they said with one voice "His blood be on us and on our children" (Matthew 27:24). Then Pilate delivered Messiah to them to be crucified.

HANGING ON THE CROSS

When they took the Messiah to the site of the Cross, according to the New Testament, the sixth hour had set in, which in terms of the time of that period would be between 3 and 4. There were also two other convicts who were to be crucified. It is clear that it means a lot of difference between hanging one convict and hanging three; it would take a short time to hang one but three would definitely take much longer. There is still another point which neither Muslims in general understand nor do the Christians due to lack of knowledge of their religion. In those days a wooden frame was affixed to serve as Cross. It was shaped like (+). When it was decided to

hang a person on the Cross, he was made to stand pat against this wood-piece and his out stretched aims were held in place with wooden pieces. Then nails were driven in the fleshy parts of the arms and legs of the convict. He would thus hang there thirsty and hungry till death.

Under certain circumstances, they would also drive a nail each in the palms of the hands, besides the nails driven through the fleshy parts of arms and legs. Those who are well up in anatomy know that it does not hurt the bones in any way. To be brief, at the time of crucifixion, nails were not driven through the bones of the body but through the soft flesh of the arms and forelegs. There is no doubt about it that driving of nails, into the flesh of the body is dangerously harmful to man. Not to say of nails, some persons cry hard when even taking a common injection.

DEATH ON CROSS, A MATTER OF DAYS

Nevertheless, there is not the least doubt about it that death on the Cross took place after quite a few days, the victim passing away in slow agony as death was never sudden. If Cross had an aspect of terror, and caused severe mental torture to the sufferer who now saw the nails then the hammer, again the hammerman rising to drive the nail, now the nail placed against the body, oh,

the hammer is about to fall— all these things tending to frighten him out of his wits, and he becomes fearfully panicstricken; as, otherwise, merely piercing of the flesh does not hurt so deeply as to become unbearable. In wars thousands of sword cuts are inflicted and flesh is lopped off but as the sword fall suddenly, it does not strike terror. But the nail has its terror, leaving one wondering as to what would happen next. Even if the flesh is cut off by a sword, one does not feel so much pain as is caused by a needle prick. For, one comes to realize it when the flesh has been lopped off. In fact, on many occasions if one finds the hone has been saved, instead of getting alarmed, one feels grateful to God. But as the doctor makes ready the syringe for injection, one feels as if the surgeon were going to slaughter him and becomes terror-stricken. No doubt what happened to the Messiah was a shockingly grievous thing mentally; but he did not suffer the real pain which results in human death. Since, however, he was of a delicate disposition, he could not bear even that much and fell into a swoon. As against this the thieves hung on his right and left cracked jokes with each other. In fact, one of them cast in his teeth, "if thou be Christ, save thyself and us." But the other answering rebuked him, saying, 'Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss' (St. Luke 23:39-40). Now they

were hanging on the Cross, and cutting such jokes, for, they were hard-hearted and cared little what they were suffering. Such is generally the temperament of those who have in them the capacity to bear hardship.

In Kashmir we have an Ahmadi family who were the rulers of Muzaffarabad in the past. The Maharaja of Kashmir defeated them and taking the Raja a prisoner brought him to Srinagar and sanctioned an allowance for the family's maintenance. This happened during the time of Maharaja Ranbir Singh during whose period Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I (Allah be pleased with him) was in the service of the Jammu and Kashmir State. This Muslim Raja was a very handsome and well-built youth and the Maharaja greatly admired his personal appearance. One day he fell down while playing polo and broke his arm. He was treated and the bone was reset hut was set with a slight crookedness. One day in the court, the Maharaja enquired of him if the bone had been set. He told him that it had been set. The Maharaja asked to show it to him. He did and the Maharaja remarked that it was crooked and that his beauty had suffered thereby. "You were such a handsome man. If you had told me, I would have appointed my own doctor and got the bone set properly." The Raja was sitting in a chair at the time. With great equanimity of mind, putting pressure on his arm, he gave a sudden jerk so that the arm was fractured and then observed: "Highness, now have it reset." Seeing

this, the Maharaja almost fell into a swoon and left the court room at once.

MESSIAH ON THE CROSS

There are thus to be found hard-hearted people of this type who do could not careless. But the Messiah was a man with a delicate disposition. The malefactors on his right and left passed jokes but Jesus lost consciousness. When he regained consciousness he began moaning. But it appears he had his wits about him, as, the New Testament says, when his mother came and he saw her, he was in a strange state of mind; it occurred to him that his mother must be going through a great agony at the moment. Before him stood his disciple Thomas. Looking at him he said to Thomas "Behold thy mother" and addressing his mother he said "woman, behold thy son." Some people have fallen into an error in respect of Thomas, interpreting that word as twin-brother which would mean that the Messiah had a father. In Hebrew the word Thomas means a foster-brother. It therefore indicates simply that Thomas and Messiah were suckled by one and the same woman or perhaps he was also suckled by Mary and thus became a foster-brother of Jesus. However, in this brief sentence, the Messiah, in a very subtle manner, drew the attention of Thomas to the fact that he hung on the Cross at the moment and though

he had faith in the promises of God, it was possible that he had erred in interpreting the meaning of those promises, he, therefore, was leaving his mother to his care, simultaneously telling his mother to take Thomas for her son. Throughout the New Testament this is the only occasion when the Messiah is said to have shown some affection towards his mother, for, a perusal of the New Testament gives the impression that he had some sort of grouse against her, there being nowhere any show of affection on his part. In short, the Messiah was in such a state that he sometimes was conscious and sometimes fell into a swoon. The centurions appointed by Pilate on the occasion were also his disciples at heart. When they saw that the Messiah could not bear the agony, they quickly dipped a piece of sponge in wine and myrrh and gave it to him to suck. The New Testament simply says that the Messiah was given a sponge soaked in vinegar (St. Mark, 15:36), but history confirms that he was given a mixture of wine and myrrh (Jewish Encyclopaedia, Vol. IV, under the word 'Cross').

Christians generally labour very much the point that Jews were so hard on the Messiah that when he was moaning in agony, they gave him a sponge soaked in wine and myrrh to suck. References from Roman literature, however, show that they gave a mixture of wine and myrrh when they wanted to show favour to someone and to save him from pain. We do not know

whether it is of any therapeutically value or not, but the people at that time were under the impression that wine and myrrh mitigated pain. This incident also shows that the centurions on guard were at heart his followers and wished to do their best to mitigate his sufferings. Again, as I have stated before, he was put on the Cross on Friday in the afternoon and the Sabbath started with the eventide. In present times the day start after 12 midnight but, according to the Islamic calculation the next day begins immediately after sundown and it was the same with the Jews. Thus the Jewish Sabbath started with the sunset and the belief was current among the Jews that if anyone remained on the Cross on the Sabbath-day, this brought down the wrath of God. Accordingly, hardly a couple of hours had passed when Pilate pointed out to them that the Sabbath-day was drawing nigh and if he remained on the Cross, they would incur the wrath of God. At the same time God caused a severe storm to blow and there was darkness over the whole land (St. Mark, 15:33). Seeing this the Jews feared all the more, lest they should incur the wrath of God, if he remained on the Cross whilst the Sabbath set in. Therefore, they besought Pilate that he might be taken off the Cross (St. John, 19:31).

Suppose he was taken off the Cross barely half an hour or three quarters of an hour before the Sabbath day set in, it would necessarily reduce the period of his crucifixion to some extent. Suppose the sun set at 7 and he was

put to the Cross at 3:30, it would make a total period of 3½ hours. But since it became dark all over, owing to a severe storm, he was taken down soon, for fear of the Sabbath day setting in. Even if it made a difference of half an hour or three quarters of an hour, it could be reasonably said that the Messiah remained on the Cross for 2½ to 3 hours. As a matter of fact, people retained life even when hung up on the Cross for as long as seven days and would die either on account of hunger and thirst or sepsis of the wounds. Again, it was a rule to break the bones of those who were taken down the Cross alive. But while the centurions on guard broke the bones of the malefactors, they did not break the bones of the Messiah. Infact, crucifixion literally means breaking the bones and extracting the marrow. This description was applied because people generally would not give up ghost on the Cross and their bones had to be broken and their marrow taken out.

The bones of the Messiah (peace be on him) were not broken (St. Joh, 19:33).

MESSIAH LIVED ON THE CROSS

Another proof of the Messiah being yet alive when he was taken down the Cross, is the reference in the New Testament that when the Messiah was taken down "one

of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (St. John 19:34).

Oozing of blood and water from the body is certainly not meant as an idiomatic expression; it simply means that liquid blood flowed forth. Otherwise, if the version of the New Testament is taken as it is, it would mean that there are two different substances, water and blood and that there is some substance other than blood serum, while, as a matter of fact there is no other substance. This expression, therefore, does not stand for blood and water but for running blood.Among the Jews, however, they gave out that he had expired and that is why they did not break his bones. It appears that the Jews were also ill at ease and felt that they had caused an innocent man to suffer. Since there was fear in their hearts and they knew that they were subjecting a just and Godly man to punishment, therefore when they witnessed a terrible storm, they were panicky, taking it as the wrath of God, and consequently did not put forward any further obstacle; on the contrary they said if he had died, he might be buried.

All these incidents add up to the conclusion that there is no question of the Messiah dying on the Cross. Generally, people would live as long as seven days and their legs had to be broken to finish them off. There was no chance therefore, of their passing away after being on

the Cross for 2½ to 3 hours. At the most the Messiah was on the Cross for 3½ hours. But when people would remain alive on the same Cross for as long as seven days, how could he die in 3½ hours, or, in less time than that, particularly when his own followers stood guard on him doing their best to mitigate his suffering and trying to save him.

AFTER THE CROSS

However, when the Messiah was taken down the Cross, Joseph Arimathides approached Pilate and asked to be given the body. Pilate ordered that the body of Jesus be given to Joseph Arimathides (St. Matthew 27:58). Then Joseph Arimathides placed him in a sepulchre which was not like any of our graves. If one is placed in one of our graves he would die of suffocation, for, it is made in a different shape. That sepulchre was an open cellar hewn out in a rock (St. Matthew 27:60). Joseph Arimathides laid Jesus in that sepulchre and rolled a great stone to its door, (St. Matthew 7:60), so that people may have no suspicion and at the same time, there may remain some inlet for air. All these facts make it clear that it was absolutely impossible for the Messiah to die. A man would breathe his last while rising from his seat, or would kick off while halting in his walk, but this is a different thing. The point under discussion is that, generally in the circumstances,

in which the Messiah was placed, people did not die but would live and the death of Jesus under these conditions was utterly impossible.

From the beginning to the end, the people who remained with him were either his followers or friends and well-wishers and did all they possibly could to save him. Again, their solicitude for him is also evident from the fact that, after the Messiah had been removed from the Cross and placed in a sepulchre, when the Jews pleaded that guards be placed there for three days and three nights as the Messiah had claimed that he would rise like Jonah after three days and three nights, Pilate refused to detail official guards, saying,

> "Ye have a watch go your way, make it as sure as ye can." (St, Matthew 27:65)

Pilate's refusal was due to the consideration that if official watch was placed, the Messiah would not be able to get away, and in case he clashed with the centurions, it would be an act of resistance to the government, and that private watch would be easy to handle.

The subsequent events also support the conclusion that the Messiah did not die on the Cross.

MESSIAH GOES INTO HIDING

If, as the Christians hold, the Messiah was resurrected, then he had surely become the Son of God. In that case, he could have no fear of men. But the New Testament says that after the incident of the Cross, he used to go about concealing his identity and would tell his disciples not to disclose to anyone that he was alive. In fact, the New Testament has it that he would not tell even the disciples his whereabouts. Possibly, he lived in the house of Joseph Arimathides. For, it is mentioned that the Messiah would suddenly put in an appearance and would, after a short while, disappear.

CAN SPIRIT EAT HONEY?

Once when he came to the disciples, they would not believe their eyes that the Messiah in person was standing before them. Thereupon, he asked if they had some food. They gave him a piece of broiled fish and honey and he ate before them and then they believed that it was Jesus they were beholding (St. Luke 24:41-43).

It is quite evident that no spirit would do anything of the sort. Only the body would do this. But, since, according to the state law he had been sentenced to be hanged on the Cross, had he been apprehended, he would have been hanged again; it was imperative that he should keep

underground and should not disclose his hide-out even to the disciples.

In short, it is clear beyond doubt, from the accounts of the New Testament that the Messiah did not die on the Cross; that, on the contrary, he remained alive on it, remained alive in the sepulchre and rose alive from there and told the disciples that he was alive. It is very revealing indeed when the New Testament says that when Thomas learnt that the Messiah was alive, he said he would not believe until he had seen in his hands "the print of nails" and had put his fingers into them. Thereupon, the Messiah called Thomas and said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side," to see for himself whether he was the self-same Messiah and was not a spirit (St. John, 20:24-29).

MESSIAH MAKES GOOD HIS ESCAPE

All these events make it plain that the prophecy of the Messiah that "no sign shall be given this generation but the sign of Jonah" was fulfilled to the letter. A Messiah of flesh and bone was hanged on the Cross, but he remained alive on the Cross, alive he entered the sepulchre, and alive he rose from it. Subsequently he remained in hiding from the people as the law of the land did not permit his stay there any longer. And this was the hidden device of

God under which he was obliged to leave for Kashmir and Afghanistan to seek out the lost sheep of Israel. God knew that under the circumstances Jesus would not like to stay in his country anymore and would gladly betake himself to the tribes he had been raised to guide and reform. And so it came to pass. When he saw that it was difficult for him to stay in Palestine, he left for the east and preached the message of God to the ten tribes that had settled in Kashmir and Afghanistan. The latter part of this story has no concern with the Bible and concerns the history of Afghanistan and Kashmir and some ancient tribal traditions. The Promised Messiah (peace and salutations be on him) has thrown great light in his book "Jesus in India" on the subject and established, on historical evidence, that the Messiah migrated to Afghanistan and Kashmir after the incident of the Cross. Besides this, some further researches have conclusively established that a Prophet who was known as "Prince Prophet" and had marks of wounds in his hands and feet, migrating from the West, came down to Kashmir and communicated to the people the message of God.

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